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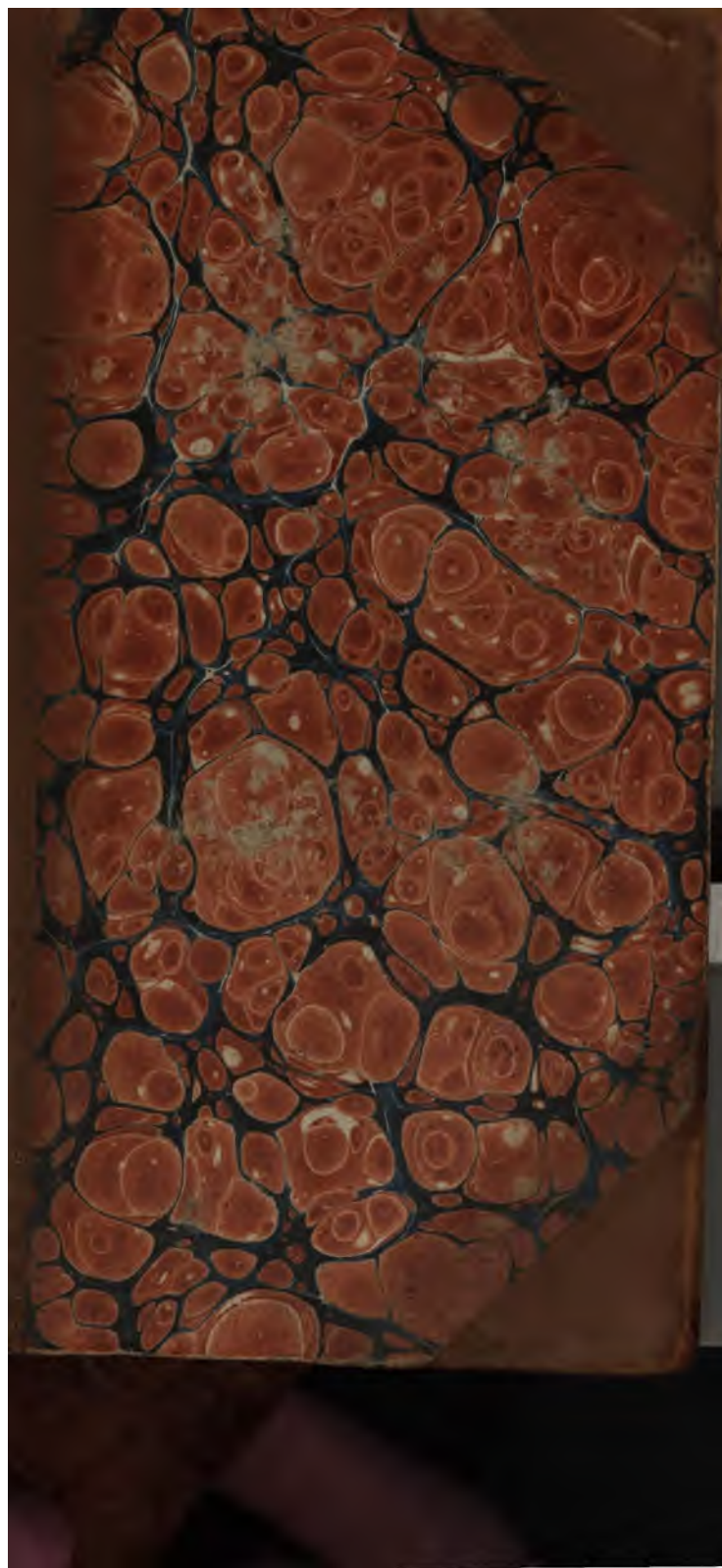
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S. A. 1832

ALICE SEYMOUR.

A TALE.

to Alice

Some feelings are to mortals given,
With less of earth in them than heaven ;
And if there be a human tear
From passion's dross refined and clear—
A tear so limpid and so meek,
It would not stain an angel's cheek—
'Tis that which pious mothers shed
Upon a duteous daughter's head !

W. SCOTT.

LONDON :

J. HATCHARD AND SON, 187, PICCADILLY.

1831.

96.



LONDON:

IBOTSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

DEDICATION.

MY DEAR CHILDREN,

You have often urged me to write something for your amusement, and I have endeavoured to satisfy your wishes.

It has been my earnest desire, that this little history should contain such instruction as may be of real and lasting advantage to you all.

Do not consider my heroine too perfect a model for your imitation ; for in my own experience I have met with persons, even of her age, endowed with talents equal to those described as possessed by her ; and the strength of mind, which evinces itself in every action of her life, is attainable by all who have a sincere and heartfelt wish to acquire a truly reli-

gious frame of mind, from which alone fortitude, submission, and true humility, are to be gained.

It is with sincere pleasure that I dedicate this little work to you, and trust that it will be a lasting memorial of my affection, and also of my sentiments with regard to what your conduct ought to be throughout life.

In the fervent hope of seeing all the virtues and perfections of Alice Seymour reflected in you, my dear children, I bid you adieu, in the full expectation, from your present promising dispositions, that your earnest exertions will be used to prove your filial love, and to advance stedfastly in the path of virtue.

Believe me

Your affectionate Mother,

THE AUTHORESS.

ALICE SEYMOUR.

CHAPTER I.

ALICE SEYMOUR, the heroine of this tale, was the daughter of a gentleman who had accumulated a large fortune in a banking-house. He had by merit and industry raised himself from the situation of clerk to that of partner, and from that time had been every year acquiring increased wealth.

In the days of his comparative insignificance, Mr. Seymour had married an amiable young woman, whose station in life was every way suited to his own. She had united herself to him from mo-

tives of sincere affection, and never for a moment anticipated the brilliant lot which awaited her.

From the period of their union, every thing appeared to prosper. Affluence seemed to pour in upon them, and at the time Alice made her most welcome appearance upon the stage of life, her parents were living in a beautiful villa in the neighbourhood of London, surrounded by all the luxuries and magnificence of wealth. Under these circumstances it may be easily imagined that the birth of Alice was attended by prospects of the brightest nature. A nursery, fitted up like the abode of a princess, was prepared for her, close to the chamber of her parents, whose happiness appeared all centered in this little being. The business of Mr. Seymour obliged him to be much from home; but every evening he returned to his family, and his first visit was to his baby's room. Did he happen to arrive during her sleeping moments,

how tenderly would he withdraw the silken curtains of her cot, and with eyes often moistened by the tear of doting affection, gaze with delight upon his treasure! Many a silent prayer was mentally addressed by this tender father, for the welfare of his darling child; and these pious wishes seemed to be received by the Author of all good, for every blessing appeared to be bestowed upon Alice, who, full of health and beauty, gave, as her mind gradually developed, every hope of being possessed of the sweetest disposition.

Her watchful parents were determined to give her every attainable advantage; therefore even in the choice of a nurse Alice was fortunate; for they had selected for that office a young person who had been most carefully brought up, and thus, from her earliest infancy, Alice had the advantage of living with those who were well able to direct her young mind. To these circumstances may be ascribed

the sense of religion which was early inculcated in her heart, and that goodness and piety which embellished every act of her future life.

Her nurse was a truly excellent person, and no sooner did reason sufficiently enlighten the mind of the little Alice, than she was taught to pray ! But when she was allowed to address her Father in heaven, it was a privilege earned by good behaviour, and she was taught to consider it the highest she could obtain. Prayers uttered in such purity and goodness, one must believe are accepted and registered in heaven ; and it was indeed a beautiful sight, to see so young and lovely a creature, her eyes lifted up in infantine piety, lisping forth that little prayer, which I have always endeavoured to impress upon your minds, my beloved children ; but for the edification of any other young reader who may be unacquainted with it, I shall transcribe it here.

“ O Lord ! I know that thou art a

tender Father, and if I seek thee early, I shall not seek in vain. O teach me to love Thee! and to know thy dear Son Jesus Christ! who, when he came on earth to save sinners, took little children into his arms, and blessed them."

Mr. Seymour's affection for his little girl appeared daily to increase—she was his idol. Her mother vainly endeavoured to moderate this too great love for an earthly object; not that her affection for her child was less fervent,—she loved her as dearly,—but her prayers to God were mingled with petitions that through His goodness she might acquire strength of mind not to allow this much loved child to prove to her a source of evil, by making her less mindful of the love she owed to her Redeemer, or by making this world so delightful, as to render the thought of leaving it a cause for anguish and affliction.

Mrs. Seymour's health had never been good; and as since her marriage she had

lived much alone, she possessed an advantage of which her husband, from the nature of his occupations, had been deprived. She had time for reflection—and she had made good use of that time! A great portion of each day had been devoted by her to the study of the Scriptures, and hence she became a truly enlightened Christian. Often did she entreat Mr. Seymour to recollect that their child was a mere mortal; that a few hours' illness might deprive them of her : and that it was his duty to set bounds to his feelings. When he looked at his darling, bright with health and beauty, he felt angry with his wife for interrupting his dreams of happiness by such gloomy anticipations ; and went off to his counting-house with his mind full of schemes for increasing her wealth, and adding, as he imagined, to her happiness.

In the mean time, Alice was surrounded by masters of every description. Her father, in the pride of his heart, used to

declare that "his daughter should be the most accomplished, as well as the richest heiress in England;" and his prediction seemed likely to be fulfilled in one sense, for Alice readily acquired every kind of accomplishment. Her musical talents were surprising; and her delighted father, sparing no expense for her, the best of masters and the finest instruments were at her command. Little did she imagine that those talents, which she only at that moment prized as they were sources of such pleasure to her parents, were to prove to her indeed treasures!

The character of Alice was a delightful mixture of simplicity and firmness; and, owing to her mother's watchful care, amidst all the temptations which surrounded her, she remained unspoiled. She was early told how vain are the enjoyments of this world; that however bright our prospects are on earth, a single dispensation from the Almighty may in one moment deprive us of every

worldly happiness; and her mother taught her that to heaven alone she must look for unfailing joy.

Living, as she did, a great deal alone with her mother, whose health was gradually declining, Alice acquired, even in early years, habits of deep reflection and observation. With a heart formed to experience the best affections of our nature, she tenderly adored both her parents; but to her mother she looked up with a degree of veneration. Her piety, her charity, the resignation with which she endured a most painful and incurable complaint, and, above all, the tender affection she evinced towards her child, inspired Alice with a feeling almost more than filial. By this sentiment, happiness to her was never perfectly unalloyed. The idea of her mother's ill health, and the fear of losing her, threw a degree of depression over her feelings, which none of the high wrought luxuries and amusements of wealth could divert, and her

greatest source of comfort was studying to please her dearest parent. Not a word or an action escaped her, that could in the most remote manner give her pain; and while she ever watched her mother's countenance with the most anxious interest, a gleam of satisfaction emanating from it, afforded purer delight to her heart than she ever received from any other source. Fervent were her prayers for her mother's recovery:—"Give me, O Lord! the happiness of seeing my mother without suffering, and I will submit uncomplainingly to any dispensation which may fall upon me!" This was the substance of many a prayer which, in sincerity of heart, she addressed to Heaven.

In spite of this drawback to her felicity, Alice, to the casual observer, appeared a being much to be envied. Nature seemed to have bestowed upon her all its choicest blessings. Beautiful, highly gifted, and with every enjoyment that

health and fortune can give, her lot was at once the subject of rejoicing and envy, according to the disposition of those who witnessed her prosperity. But when shall we learn to calculate happiness by external appearance? When will the poor, the afflicted, the destitute, be taught to believe that the gifts of our heavenly Father are much more equally dispersed than they imagined—that the rich are not always happy? They should learn, who look with discontent on their fate, when observing how fortune smiles upon another, “that the heart alone knows its own sorrows:” and that in many an envied lot some root of bitterness has been planted, felt only by its possessor, which rankling in the heart where it has fixed its thorn, blights every joy when all without seems blossoming!

CHAPTER II.

WE must now imagine Alice nearly fifteen. Tall and womanly in her appearance, with her mind more cultivated than those of children in general at her age, and with sense much above her years; she was, however, childish in her manners and pursuits. Having associated very little with other young people, her amusements were all centered in her home; and how liberally had the tenderness of her father supplied that home with sources of pleasure! Her flower-garden, which formed her chief delight, with its gay parterres, and rare exotics, was a little paradise, -and a fit spot for a beautiful rustic cottage, which was built in it, and fitted

up in the prettiest manner. It was there that in the summer months she used to prevail upon Mrs. Seymour to allow her to pursue her studies ; and there she used to declare she could practise her harp and guitar with much more advantage, as the sweet smell of the flowers, the singing of the birds, and the delicious feeling of summer, experienced in so lovely a place, gave fresh energy to her spirits, and inspired her fingers with greater power. Her mother humoured her fancy, and used to contemplate with delight the form of her good and lovely child, whilst with a masterly touch she drew forth strains of the sweetest melody ; and those lines of Shakspeare would occur to her as applicable to her feelings,—

“ Oh ! it came o’er my ear like the sweet south

“ That breathes upon a bank of violets,

“ Stealing and giving odour !”

However, Mrs. Seymour, even amidst all this happiness, could not stifle feelings of a most painful nature, when she re-

flected that in all probability she would never live to see her beautiful child expand in all the maturer charms of woman ; she felt that her days were numbered, and prayed for fortitude to enable her to detach her heart from those ties which bound her so closely to this earth.

Alice, whose tender disposition was formed to love every thing in creation, was surrounded by pets of every description ; and a beautiful aviary was one of her most delightful cares. She had also two pretty ponies and a little carriage considered as her exclusive property ; but her greatest darling, her spoilt plaything, was her own Selim—a beautiful little black pony, upon which she had been accustomed to ride ever since she was six years old. Her fondness for this little animal almost amounted to folly, and her mother used gently to chide her for it ; indeed, as a child, her greatest punishment for any little fault was to be debarred from a ride upon her favourite.

The affection which his mistress evinced for the sagacious Selim, appeared to be well returned by him; for he knew her voice, would follow her, and almost seemed to caress the hand which offered him a daily portion of bread; and how delighted was she to hear his joyful neigh, when she was allowed to go with her father to visit him in his stable, and he perceived her approaching with a basket full of dainties for his pampered taste. Poor Alice! even your love for Selim is another bitter drop in your cup!

I am dwelling much upon all the happiness she once possessed; but the scene must soon change—how wofully change!—and I wish to impress upon your minds the extent of all she lost, that you, my readers, may estimate fully the manner in which she sustained the melancholy reverse.

Alice had frequently the happiness of driving her mother in her little carriage whenever the weather and her state of

health enabled her to bear the exercise ; and another of her pleasures was to be the bearer of comforts to their poor neighbours. Often, directed by Mr. Seymour, did Alice contribute to their aid, not only by supplying them with food and clothes, but many a sick and dying Christian was comforted by the kind solicitude with which she used to read to them such prayers, and such portions of the Scriptures, as Mrs. Seymour considered most adapted to their different situations.

Young as she was, she had the heartfelt joy of having, by her fervent endeavours, assisted by an almighty hand, inclined more than one dying sinner to think seriously and to repent.

It may seem strange and unnatural that a child of her age should be able to achieve so great a work ; but we ought not to be surprised. Any young person who knows her religious duties, and humbly endeavours to understand the history and doctrines of Jesus Christ, may, to the best of

her ability, endeavour to convey instruction to those whose ignorance has not, like her own, been enlightened. God, who knows every secret of our hearts, will bless the undertaking,—will pardon all imperfections in our manner of so doing, and in his great goodness, He will consider the will to be of use, as sufficient.

Amongst the scholars in her Sunday school, a girl of the name of Sarah Browne, was an object of much interest to Alice. This poor girl possessed every evil quality most repugnant to our feelings. Selfish and self-willed, no reproof or correction appeared to make any impression upon her apparently hard and obstinate heart. Her parents complained of her conduct, and her brothers and sisters disliked her; in short, she was the aversion of every one.

In vain did Alice labour to reform her temper, and she often returned home in tears, after futile endeavours to make an

impression upon the feelings of the perverse Sarah. She used to say,—“Mama, what will become of that unfortunate girl? This evening her mother came to tell me, that having reproved her for some impertinent answer, she almost dashed the baby she held in her arms, upon the ground, and said that she did not care whether she had killed it!—What is to be done, dearest mother, after all the religious education she has received?”

“My Alice, we must pray for the conversion of sinners. Let us not be weary in well doing; if we see no fruit at present, still we must persevere, and trust in Him who alone can change the heart. Look upon our Saviour as your model. Every mighty work which he achieved on earth, was ushered in by prayer; and did He ask consolation for Himself or others, he only prayed the more fervently. We must never despair, but always hope, that sooner or later, the heart of the sinner,

through the mercy of God, may be brought to repentance."

Notwithstanding the anxious efforts and prayers of Alice, the wickedness of Sarah appeared to increase. Her hour of retribution was, however, near at hand!

A malignant putrid fever broke out in the family of the Brownes. Sarah's mother and two of her younger brothers were carried to their graves; she also suffered long and violently; and even when she partially recovered, her health seemed undermined.

Alice could not safely visit the poor girl during her illness; but many were the acts of kindness she received from Elm Grove.

After a time, Sarah was removed to the house of a neighbour, and when all fear of infection was over, Alice was allowed to pay her a visit. What a change had a few months made in the appearance and character of this unfortunate child! Self-

ish and wicked as she always had been, there were at the bottom of her heart some germs of affection for her mother. The miserable death of this parent and of her youthful brothers, the bereaved state of her father, and the rest of the family, with her own weakened and helpless condition, had awakened those feelings which before had slept!

Alice scarcely recognised the poor faded being, who, throwing herself upon her knees and clasping her thin hands together, exclaimed, "Miss Seymour!—my mother!—my poor mother!"

Alice, greatly affected, raised her in her arms, and replacing her in the easy chair, assisted in giving her a cordial, which by degrees revived her. The old woman, in whose house she now resided, said, "O Miss! you will find her an altered girl; she is truly sorry for her sins, and that Bible which you gave her, and which was once despised by her, is now her only comfort, although she is sadly frightened

at her state, and thinks there can be no hope for such a wicked girl as she has been."

When Sarah was more composed, she again reverted to her sad loss. "O Miss Seymour! had you heard my mother's groans, and witnessed her suffering! How much would even a good daughter have suffered!—but what did I, vile wretch! endure, when I heard her say, in the agony of her spirit—'What will become of my poor babes? I have no daughter to be kind to them, when I am gone—the one I have, who might have been a mother to them,—what is she?'—I went to my mother's bedside; I knelt before it, and assured her that I would endeavour to amend my conduct. She shook her head incredulously. She who knew my wickedness, could not believe in my reformation. She, however, said—'God bless you, Sarah! I forgive you for all the heart-aches you have given me—I wish I could believe in your promises; but,

perhaps, God will soften your heart.' She died thinking me worthless ; and here am I, laid up with sickness, and expecting every day to die, with no opportunity given me of showing my repentance by actions as well as words ; and trembling with horror at the idea of leaving this world unreconciled to my Redeemer,—I who have had the advantage of a religious education !”

Alice was too much affected for some moments to speak comfort to the poor penitent ; but she endeavoured to collect her thoughts, that she might make use of arguments which she hoped would besoothing. She had been lately reading a book to Mrs. Seymour, in which a passage had made so great an impression on her mind, that she was able to repeat it with tolerable accuracy.

—“ There is not an individual who has ever said, or who shall ever say from the bottom of his heart—‘ I am a sinful man, O Lord !’—to whom that Lord shall not

reply—‘ Fear not.’ How blessed an assurance to the truly penitent! How comforting a declaration to the sorrowing soul!—Are you saying with the deeply repentant Psalmist, ‘ There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones by reason of my sin, for mine iniquities have gone over my head as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me to bear?’ Then hear the reply of that gracious Being to whom you complain: ‘ Fear not, though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow.’ Be assured then, upon the testimony of that revealed word which cannot alter, and shall not fail, though heaven and earth shall pass away; be assured upon the evidence that the believing penitent has no ground for fear, that the same Saviour addresses you at this hour, in the same accents of tenderness and compassion which he addressed to his disciple Peter. Fall low before his feet as Peter did, with an humble and contrite

spirit ; plead before his throne of grace with the outpourings of a full heart, and He will raise you, as he did this convicted sinner, and be himself your portion for time and eternity."

Alice had the satisfaction of leaving the afflicted Sarah with her mind more tranquillized and comforted ; and henceforth never relaxed in her endeavours, but spent every leisure moment by her side until she saw her undertaking likely to succeed. The medical practitioner who attended Sarah, gave some faint hopes of her ultimate recovery, provided her mind could be soothed ; for the agonies of remorse and grief which she endured kept up the irritation of the fever ; but Alice was indefatigable with her tender cares and pious counsels, and taught her that by future good conduct she might "redeem her mispent time." She also spoke to the truly penitent girl of the power she would have of becoming useful to her father, and to his children ; and this hope seemed to

offer great consolation, should the Almighty spare her life; while fervent prayers for the amendment of her temper, and for assistance and power to do right, were fervently offered up by the afflicted Sarah.

By slow degrees her health amended, and in the course of a few months, Alice had the heartfelt gratification of seeing her established in her father's house, acting really a mother's part towards her brothers and sisters. Not a lingering spark of her former disposition remained, and her father most gratefully joined his prayers with hers, that every blessing might be showered on the kind friend to whom, by the mercy of God, they were indebted for their present blessings.

CHAPTER III.

MRS. SEYMOUR had a brother considerably older than herself, and whom she had never seen since she was a very young child. Her recollections of him offered no very pleasing retrospect; for even in early years, his violent, overbearing, and unyielding disposition, had impressed her mind with terror, while the circumstance of his having left his home in anger, and never having sought any communication with his family, conspired to alienate her affections from him, though now he was the only relative death had spared to her. He had passed his life in India, where he amassed an enor-

mous fortune ; and on his return to England placed the bulk of his property in the thriving and respectable banking-house to which Mr. Seymour belonged. This act was by his gentle sister construed as a wish of renewing that intercourse so long broken off ; and through the medium of Mr. Seymour she expressed her desire of seeing him, and the happiness she felt at the prospect of showing kindness and attention to her only though long-estranged relative. But Mr. Harcourt was a man of extraordinary habits and temper, and had become a complete misanthrope. Nothing would induce him to have an interview with his sister or niece, and he merely saw Mr. Seymour as a man of business. With all this apparent churlishness, he had, however, one redeeming quality, and was in the habit of doing good in a most extensive manner, though even his mode of conferring kindness partook of the singularity and inconsistency of his character ; but stubborn in his ideas, and

immovable in his resolutions, when once prejudiced against a person, no power on earth could subdue his dislike. He fancied that his sister, from the style in which she was living, must be an extravagant, fine lady, a character he held in abhorrence; and he would not be convinced that it was to please her husband alone, that she permitted the splendour which surrounded her.

Little did he imagine, that in the retirement of her chamber, her humble spirit, bowed down by sickness and suffering, looked back with regret to past days of comparative poverty, when living close to her husband in an obscure lodging in the city, she had the happiness of seeing him, during all his leisure hours, cheerful, happy, and contented. She often thought of the Sundays they used to spend together in devotion and harmless recreation. What would she not now have exchanged for the delightful feeling of honest pride with which she used to enter the church

leaning upon the arm of her beloved and excellent husband ! and with what thankfulness did she pour forth her praises to her God, for having bestowed upon her so great a blessing ! How gladly would she have forfeited all the empty and importunate splendours of wealth, for feelings such as those, now long lost !

Mr. Seymour, ever since he had become rich and powerful, appeared to be entirely engrossed by business, and there was scarcely a moment he could call his own : while even the sabbath was broken into by letters of business, or interviews upon the same subject. His wife sighed in vain, and would often entreat him to reflect, that he was neglecting a far more important concern for the perishable goods of this world. He would answer, that the affairs of others as well as his own were at stake, and that he could not in honour neglect the immense concern in which he had embarked. Mrs. Seymour, although in bitter grief, saw that it was

useless to interfere, and that her dear husband had lost all semblance of his former self; and with this unceasing and absorbing care for the accumulation of wealth, how unlike the cheerful, happy being she had married!

The presence of Alice alone had the power of rousing him from his commercial reveries. Her music was his delight, her beauty his pride; and the idea of adding to her riches appeared to repay him for all his labour and anxiety.

Mr. Harcourt, fond of money, which he seemed only to amass for the gratification of being able to count his treasure, watched with an attentive eye the interests of the house in which he had placed it. No brotherly or kind feeling had induced him to invest his enormous fortune in the firm to which Mr. Seymour belonged, but the idea that it was a good and respectable concern; soon, however, rumours met his ear that Mr. Seymour had largely em-

barked in the most extensive speculations.

Immediately on hearing this he desired to have an interview with his brother-in-law, and then told him, in the most abrupt manner, that on the morrow he intended to withdraw from the house every shilling belonging to him.

In vain Mr. Seymour prayed for a short delay, telling him that ruin would inevitably follow, for that they were totally unprepared to lose so large a sum—that his sister and her child would be reduced to beggary—that hundreds would suffer by this cruel and sudden step. Mr. Harcourt was inexorable. “It is your own fault,” he said; “why did you make your wife a fine lady, and your daughter a puppet? Am I to suffer from your folly, that has made you, to contribute to their extravagance and vanity, depart from integrity? I know your firm is in a tottering state from your unwise speculations, and that

my wealth alone prevents its falling to the ground. Even that would not long save it ; but you have your own imprudence and ambition to thank for all the misery you have brought upon yourself and others."

He was firmly bent upon extricating his fortune from what he considered impending ruin. The deed was done ; and the next morning announced the failure of the great banking-house of Messrs. Brown, Seymour, and Co. With this unfortunate and overwhelming occurrence was further annexed, the sudden and melancholy death of Mr. Seymour, occasioned by the rupture of a blood-vessel !

It was at the close of a dreary day in November, that Alice and her mother were preparing to pass a happy and quiet evening. Mrs. Seymour was tolerably well, and had promised to read aloud to her an interesting book, whilst she finished a purse, which she was in anxious

haste completing, to present to her father on his birth-day.

She had rolled the sofa near the fire, placed the lights in the most commodious manner for her mother, had arranged her own little table to her satisfaction, and finished all by stirring the fire into a bright blaze. She looked around with satisfaction at the comfort of the room, and exclaimed, "Oh, mama, how delightful this is! The rain beating against the windows, and the wind howling amongst the trees, only tend to make us more sensible of the comforts of our home."

"Yes, Alice," replied Mrs. Seymour; "but does it not make you shudder, when you think of those who are exposed to all the blasts of this pitiless storm?"

"It does, mama; and increases my thankfulness for all the blessings I enjoy."

She had scarcely finished speaking, when a loud and continued peal was rung at the hall bell. As Mr. Seymour

had signified his intention of not returning that night, Alice and her mother looked at each other in surprise.

“Your father, I trust, is well!” exclaimed Mrs. Seymour, with alarm and anxiety depicted in her expressive countenance; and at this moment a servant announced Mr. Elliott, an intimate friend of the family, and a partner in the banking-house.

He had arrived with the intention of breaking the dreadful intelligence gently to the wife of his unfortunate friend; but the sight of her and her daughter, calm in the midst of comfort and luxury, unmanned him, his agitation every moment increased, and, throwing himself into a chair, he covered his face with his hands, exclaiming, “All is lost!—your husband—fortune—all gone for ever!”

I shall draw a veil over the scene of deep and bitter misery which ensued. I would not willingly pain your feelings more than I can possibly help; but so

sudden, so afflicting, was the blow, that even Mrs. Seymour, armed as she was with the profoundest sense of religion, quite sunk beneath the unlooked-for calamity. Her frame was enfeebled by disease ; she felt that she must soon also die—who was to be a parent to her child ?—in poverty must she struggle through life, without a natural tie to protect her ! These were Mrs. Seymour's feelings, when the grief with which her husband's death inspired her, gave way to any other reflection.

Her dear husband, whom she loved so tenderly ! The scenes of their happy youth presented themselves to her imagination, and she only remembered him as the adoring, attentive husband, only labouring for her advantage ; and, indeed, whose one error had arisen out of his love for her and her child, which led him to think too much of their worldly acquirements, and by which anxiety he was at length lost. The bitterness of her

feelings was augmented by the wretched idea of his having quitted this world with his mind so engrossed by the consideration of business, that the preparation for his state in the next could not have been his most earnest object. In short, whichever way her thoughts turned, misery appeared in its most aggravated form. She felt that perhaps she was to blame in having been too passive—in not having more fervently besought him to be satisfied with the wealth he had acquired, and to have lived more with his family in the exercise of those duties, which by comparison render every other so completely valueless.

A very brief space of time was allowed to the bereaved mother and daughter for the quiet indulgence of their grief—a grief rendered more acute by the knowledge that the failure of the house had involved many besides themselves in ruin.

Mr. Seymour's extensive property was of course seized upon by the creditors, and in a short time, Mrs. Seymour was

given to understand, that she must leave her home completely without resources.

Mr. Seymour had been unfortunately the sole cause of the ruin of the house. He had appropriated sums to the prosecution of his speculations which, had they succeeded, would have enriched equally the whole firm, but by their failure involved them all alike.

The subject is one that my young readers would not understand, therefore I shall merely tell them, that the popular feeling was considerably excited against the unfortunate man who had brought ruin upon so many.

In consequence of the kind exertions of a few sincere friends, a trifling pittance was allowed to the unfortunate wife and her daughter ; but they were requested to quit Elm Grove as soon as possible, as a sale was to take place on the premises early in the ensuing week.

It was now that Alice's character appeared in its real splendour ; for such I

must call the beautiful aspect it displayed under the trials which appeared hourly to increase.

On first hearing of the death of her father, the grief of Alice was uncontrollable. Her feelings were strong, and her love for her parent was great : her dear, kind father, whose affection for her ever beamed forth through the clouds which had lately overshadowed him—who had indulged her every wish—whose countenance had never for an instant changed towards her. Her father dead, and no one with him to soothe his expiring moments!—she was never to behold him more! Death is painful to our nature in almost every shape ; but when it seizes upon our dearest friends, then indeed it seems arrayed with tenfold sorrows! For a few minutes after the direful intelligence was communicated to her, she was absorbed in a selfish feeling, but a few moments only were devoted to her own grief. Her mother's state soon recalled

her to her duty, and from that time claimed her devoted attention; and I can truly say, that from that hour her every thought and action was devoted to her, and, assisted by her heavenly Father, upon whom she cast all her cares and griefs, and to whose assistance she alone appealed, she formed a bright example of the purest filial affection, and a model of everything that is amiable and good.

However, my own dear children, I feel no little happiness in thinking, that amiable as Alice was, there is not one amongst you who does not possess all her good feelings; and that were you tried—which God in his mercy forbid—as she has been, you would all display the same spirit of devotedness and disregard of self. You may not all possess her activity of mind and great talents, but I am sure that you would be ready and willing to exert every energy to be of use to your parents.

CHAPTER IV.

THE village bell tolled out at an early hour in the morning, on which the remains of Mr. Seymour were privately conveyed to a vault, which he had lately caused to be built in the parish church, and he was buried as he commenced his career in life—humbly, and without ostentation. Had he not pursued that phantom, wealth, with such avidity, his death might have been happy, his grave respected!

Mrs. Seymour had lived so little in the world, that she had made few acquaintances. Those who knew her sympathised in the affliction of so good a woman, but sympathy was all they had to give.

“Poor Mrs. Seymour! how I pity her!” were the usual exclamations; but very few came forward with offers of assistance.

Where were they to go? and what were they to do? Mrs. Seymour, for the sake of her child, exerted herself to write to her brother; but no answer was returned. Another pang to her agonized heart!

Alice then besought her mother to leave every arrangement to her, and their kind friend Mr. Elliott, and that they would endeavour to fix some plan which would be most advisable under their present circumstances; and Mrs. Seymour, worn out to the utmost pitch of feebleness, both in mind and body, put every thing into the hands of her child.

You must recollect that Alice was only fifteen; therefore, poor child! it was no slight degree of responsibility which she took upon herself. She prayed to the Almighty for assistance and direction;

and strengthened by the hope of his never-failing aid, she with confidence pursued that path which she considered the most expedient. After consulting with Mr. Elliott, whose anxiety for his poor friends was great, it was decided that he should take for them, at a town on the sea coast, a small lodging. Sea air had been recommended to Mrs. Seymour, and Alice trusted that it might restore her beloved mother to health: this hope cheered and roused her still more to exertion.

Poor Alice ! you knew not the trial of leaving, for the first time, the roof under which you have partaken of every blessing, where affection has been bestowed abundantly, and at that time of life when kindness makes the most durable impression—where your first lisping petitions were offered at the throne of grace, and your earliest impressions of good received ! Those who have undergone this misery, will not think lightly of the sa-

crifice which Alice was called upon to make.

The time drew near that was fixed for their departure from Elm Grove. Alice felt a great desire to take a last look at some of the objects which had formerly contributed to her happiness, and to bid adieu to the scenes of her happy infancy. She fancied she should like again to behold, before they were consigned into the hands of strangers, the little animals with whom she had amused herself, and who had excited in her kind heart feelings almost of affection. It would have been more consistent with the excellent judgment of our heroine, if she had spared herself this pang : it is useless to court grief, and if she had for a moment reflected, she would have been convinced that the gratification would have been fully overpowered by the agony of grief which the view of such scenes must occasion her.

Her first visit was to her cottage and

to her garden ; but she soon discovered that her feelings were becoming too painful for her to controul, and she did not linger on the spot which was endeared to her by so many remembrances.

She now began to think of the numerous motives she had for exertion, and that she must husband her strength for the great struggle she had to encounter ; and she blamed herself for having given way to an impulse, which had led her into a situation too exciting for her fortitude to bear.

She was hurrying back to the house, when she perceived the groom, who had always accompanied her in her rides upon Selim, and who had lived in the family ever since she was born, much esteemed as an excellent and worthy servant.

He approached Alice with tears in his eyes—" O, Miss Seymour ! this is a sad day for me, I can never be happy again."

Alice's own tears now flowed abundantly at the sight of this old and faithful

servant, in the decline of his strength, thrown upon the world and upon the bounty of strangers. The recollection too of all the happy hours with which his appearance was associated, overwhelmed her with grief. She felt that she should like once more to see her dear Selim; but knew how weak it would be to indulge in such an unnecessary excitement, and was on the point of taking an affectionate leave of her old attendant, when some other grooms passed by, leading several horses which they had been exercising, and amongst the group Alice perceived her lost favourite! Her first impulse was to run to him, and with tears and sobs she threw her arms round his neck, and kissed him as she was wont to do in her days of childhood and happiness. The little animal knew his mistress, and seemed as if he would caress the hand, from which he had received so many acts of kindness.

It was a touching sight, and sincerely

did all the beholders sympathize in her affliction ; while many were the tears that rolled down the hard cheeks of the servants who surrounded her.

“ Be kind to Selim,” she said to the groom ; “ and when he is sold, tell his purchaser that he once belonged to a little girl who was so fond of him !—Say that he was the present of her father who is gone—Oh ! my father !” exclaimed the poor girl—“ how often in our days of joy I used to ride to meet you on your return home ! How happy you used to look when you saw me approaching, and with what pleasure you used to caress Selim for carrying me so well !—and O how delighted I was the day you first gave him to me !—your poor little girl !—you made her too happy ! Thomas,” she continued, “ tell every one, that never did he feel the lash of a whip, or the wound of a spur—entreat that he may be well treated for the sake of humanity—for the sake of a poor girl who has now lost her all !”

Much more would she have said, for her feelings, long controlled, were now completely let loose ; but shew as recalled to herself by Mr. Elliott, who gently led her to the house.

As she was entering the hall, an elderly gentleman passed them abruptly, and fixed his eyes upon her in an earnest manner ; she was going to remark on this unfeeling observation and ill-timed curiosity to Mr. Elliott ; but seeing that he had not perceived it, and was engaged at the moment with other strangers who had approached, she forbore to draw his attention to it ; and proceeding with him to the library to settle some further plans relative to their approaching departure, it soon entirely passed from her mind, though at the moment there had been an expression in the stranger's gaze which had deeply annoyed her.

CHAPTER V.

SARAH BROWNE, who, it may be remembered, was the girl upon whom Alice had bestowed so much time and solicitude, had fully requited her for all her kindness, and had become a truly good and religious character. Her brothers and sisters were the objects of her tenderest care, and to her father she was a most affectionate daughter.

Alice had never lost sight of her ; it was delightful to see the manner in which she, poor girl ! now conducted herself, as she had the heartfelt comfort of knowing that she had been instrumental in bringing her to the right path.

Sarah's unhappiness at the calamity which had befallen her young benefactress was extreme ; and her heart, full of gratitude for all her numerous benefits, longed for some means of evincing it by deed, as well as by her words. She was constantly hovering about Elm Grove, in the hope of hearing some tidings of her ; and at length heard with bitter grief, that she was to quit that part of the country in a few days with her mother.

“ What would I give to go with them !” said Sarah to her informant.

“ Why, bless you !” said the woman, “ they have scarcely now enough to keep themselves, much less servants. They go off on Monday, and leave all their fine ladies and gentlemen behind them : they would all be too grand for them now. Lord knows ! they are all sorry enough to lose such good mistresses ; and Thomas the groom, and Miss Alice's maid, do nothing but sob and cry about the house. Indeed, I don't know where there is a

dry eye to be found. We shall all miss them, and I fear we shall never see their like again."

"But," said Sarah, who appeared to have been lost for some time in thought, "do you not think they would take me, who am an humble girl brought up in poverty, and accustomed to privations? I would do every thing for them, and want no pay. Dry bread would satisfy me—and O how sweet would be that bread earned in such a service! Night and day I would be ready and willing; and what sacrifice would be too great for one who has been the means, I humbly hope, of saving my soul? O Miss Alice!" continued the poor girl, "you have taught me to feel such comfort, by raising my mind beyond this world! you have made me from a sinner, now at least a penitent—to you my strongest earthly love is devoted."

The woman who was listening to her was moved by her affliction, and told her

that she would mention her wish of being useful to Mrs. Seymour and her daughter, to Thomas the groom, who was her brother, and who might contrive some means of gaining her admittance to the presence of his young mistress.

According to her promise, she met Sarah in the same place the next morning, and informed her that she might follow her to the Grove.

On their arrival, Thomas met them, and conducting Sarah into the house, desired her to wait in an upper gallery leading from the apartments occupied by Mrs. Seymour, from whence he had no doubt but that Miss Alice would soon appear.

Sarah remained in a state of trembling agitation. She dreaded seeing her beloved benefactress in sorrow ; she feared that this might be the last time she might ever again have the happiness of beholding her ; for she could scarcely believe that she might dare to look forward to

any thing so delightful, as being allowed to accompany them. She hardly knew what to say, and vainly endeavoured to frame a speech suitable for the occasion.

Presently she saw a door open, and Alice slowly approached. How different from her usual light and happy step !

Slowly and languidly did she move, with her eyes bent to the ground. Sarah could perceive that she looked thin and pale, and her eyes were red, as if from weeping. Alice had indeed just quitted her mother's bedside, where a scene of a most affecting nature had taken place.

Mrs. Seymour had passed a wretched night ; but in the morning had sunk into a profound slumber. Her poor child had been watching by her, and contemplating her pale, worn countenance, upon which the impression of pain and sorrow were deeply impressed. She had been thinking of what a change awaited her beloved mother. Surrounded as she was now by every luxury, reposing in a bed con-

structed so as to give the patient the utmost ease, the apartment airy and spacious, every thing conspiring to give that solace which art has the power to bestow—all this must be relinquished. In a few days, she would see her dear mother the inmate of a miserable lodging, stretched upon an uneasy bed, and scarcely able to command the necessaries of life! This idea was bitterness itself; and she wept from the anguish of her soul.

For herself, how little did she prize riches and affluence; for her mother alone she coveted them, and she looked upon the countenance of her adored parent, until despair almost overwhelmed her. She forgot at that moment Mrs. Seymour's piety and entire resignation to the will of God, or else she would have been comforted; she forgot also that her mother's life had been always that of a sincere Christian; that it had ever been a preparation for a future state; that heaven was her aim, and to attain it, she

did not fear the difficulties which might be in the path ; for she knew that “ the Lord chasteneth whom He loveth,” and instead of repining, she blessed the hand which led her, however harshly, to her God.

For herself, Mrs. Seymour feared nothing, and was ready and willing to suffer every thing. Her hopes had long been in a great degree detached from this world ; all ways are indifferent to one who has heaven in her eye. But Nature will usurp her rights. For her child she felt much ; and although she prayed that her faith might enable her to cast even that loved care solely on Him who never fails us in our hour of trouble, if we seek Him in real devotedness of heart, yet still her human feelings would almost gain a victory over her resignation, and with bitter anguish did she meditate upon the fate of her sweet Alice.

It was at the moment that her daughter was busied in the mournful contem-

plation of her sleeping mother, that Mrs. Seymour opened her eyes, and fixed them upon Alice, who vainly endeavoured hastily to conceal her emotion.

“My child, what means this increased sorrow?” said Mrs. Seymour, fearfully; “has any new calamity befallen us?”

“No, mother,” replied Alice, endeavouring to smile, but the effort failed; torrents of tears and sobs escaped her, and in an agony of sorrow she threw herself upon her knees, and buried her face in the bed-clothes.

“Alice, I never before saw you give way to so much grief---has your strength of mind deserted you? Am I no longer to expect you to be my comfort---my support in all my troubles? Can you have already forgotten the words of that prayer, which a few hours ago you repeated to me, and which you appeared so fervently to feel? It comforted my mind to hear you say, ‘With all my heart and soul, O God, I thank thee, that in all

the changes and chances of this mortal life, I can look up to Thee, and cheerfully resign my will to Thine.' It calmed me, and I fell asleep full of the delightful hope that my child was fortified by the assistance of the Almighty, and that she would encounter all the trials of life with unshrinking fortitude. What disappointment, on awaking, to find you thus !"

"It is not selfishly that I grieve, dearest mother ; but I cannot look forward but with horror to what you will have to endure. Poverty to you, who already suffer so much !"

"Alice, listen to me. You must prepare your mind for more afflictions ; for recollect that death must have its victims, and that I have long been marked out for one of them. Do not, my sweet child, weep, for only to you is this an unwelcome idea : to me it is happiness, except as far as it concerns you, my beloved ; and I humbly trust that, through the

mercy of God, I shall meet with joy in heaven, and rejoin those I loved on earth. Do not murmur at the evils which befall me. Human nature cannot comprehend that God loves those whom he permits to suffer; but faith teaches us that adversity is the gift of his love. Whilst I remain on earth, my Alice—and for your dear sake may my life be prolonged—let me have the comfort of seeing you firm and resigned. It will soften my pains; and poverty and misery will be deprived of their sharpest stings. All my hope on earth is you; and as long as you are armed with strength of mind, and conscientiously doing your duty, I shall feel peace; for I shall then be sure that, when I quit you, I shall have no cause for dread, as your habits of self-denial will secure for you such riches as the world cannot bestow. I have given you pain, my beloved child; but I have spoken thus plainly, that I might rouse those energies which, from all you have gone

through, are naturally weakened. I hope I have convinced you that no degree of suffering in this world appals me, farther than that you participate in it. Now kiss me, my Alice, and leave me for an hour, that I may compose my spirits for the exertions that I have to encounter; and do you go and make the necessary arrangements for our departure."

It was after this affecting conversation, that Sarah Browne advanced to meet Alice, whose feelings were in a most subdued state from all that had passed by the bedside of her mother. Kindly, however, she smiled at her, and holding out her hand, said, "Are you come to bid me farewell, Sarah?"

"No, Miss Sarah, not that—I never could do that! I am come humbly to offer my services to you, as your most humble and faithful servant. I have spoken to my father, and he is willing and happy to spare me. My aunt will take my place at home; and if you will

grant my most earnest petition, I will go with you, and serve you and your honoured mother as long as these hands can work. God knows how sincerely I am devoted to your service !”

Alice was deeply touched by this proof of attachment in the poor girl. She told her that she would consult her mother on the subject, and gave her hopes that her request might be granted.

Alice then went to complete the business of superintending the different arrangements which were preparing for their removal from Elm Grove.

The creditors had been as considerate to Mrs. Seymour as justice would permit. Their wardrobe, a few favourite trinkets and books, and a small portion of linen and plate, they were allowed to take with them.

Alice had studiously avoided entering the saloon, the favourite sitting-room of her poor father. She knew that every object in it would excite her sorrow ;

however, recollecting that she had there left her work-box and different materials for work, which might hereafter be useful to her, and also some books which she had proposed taking, she made an effort over her feelings and entered the room.

The furniture remained much in the state in which she had placed it on that wretched evening which had been to them the harbinger of death and misery. The book which her mother was about to read to her, was laying on the sofa; her work-box was partly open; and the purse which she was with such delight finishing, was plainly to be seen.

Her father's picture, and one of her mother, were suspended from the wall: another, representing herself riding joyfully on Selim, hung beneath them: these pictures now seemed to her distressed mind like mockeries of her grief.

Every way she turned, objects met her eye which occasioned fresh pangs of sor-

row. Her beautiful harp, her piano-forte, her pretty guitar, all endeared by many recollections. She went to her harp and swept its strings, but the notes which it produced seemed to her discordant and out of tune. Her piano-forte remained open as she had left it; she seated herself before it, looking with a sad gaze on her father's picture, which had been hung exactly opposite. It had been placed there at her request; for she used playfully to declare that she always practised better in consequence, as she pleased herself by imagining that the countenance of her father in the portrait had the expression of listening to her, and that idea always called forth her best exertions.

A book was open on the stand. The last time she had played upon that instrument, she was practising Mr. Seymour's favourite song; an indefinable impulse led her now to sing it. She felt as if it was communicating with her father; her

emotion gave increased expression to her style, and in a most beautiful and touching manner she sung

“Angels, ever bright and fair,
Take, oh ! take me to thy care.”

“My father !” apostrophized Alice, after she had concluded the song, “do you hear your child ? O departed spirit !” she exclaimed, throwing herself upon her knees before the portrait, “your child will never forget all your kindness ; she will endeavour to requite it by affection such as never was surpassed by a daughter, towards her mother, your beloved wife. As far as my feeble efforts will be of use, they shall be exerted to sweeten as much as possible her cup of sorrow. I will labour for her, watch by her, and pray for her ; and those talents which your kindness so liberally cultivated, will now, I trust, be a means of contributing towards the comfort and support of my dearest mother. The

Almighty, who never will forsake those who labour in a good cause, will, I feel joyfully convinced, bless my undertaking ; and through the mediation of that Saviour, who in his last moments felt tender solicitude for his earthly parent, and has therefore sanctified filial affection, I rest secure of support."

She rose from her knees with a countenance irradiated with divine consolation ; and although her cheeks were wet with tears, hope beamed from her expressive eyes.

She was proceeding to finish the occupation which brought her into the room, when happening suddenly to turn her head, she was startled on perceiving the same old gentleman who had before so inquisitively observed her, standing at the opposite door, which she had not remarked was partly open ; and probably he had been watching her for some time. Alice hastened to quit the room, hurt and annoyed at the intrusion, and which

seemed to tell her that Elm Grove was no longer her home; while she also felt confused that any one should have witnessed the emotions which had so completely overwhelmed her.

Imagining the old gentleman to be one of the many persons who were employed in taking inventories of, and valuing the splendid furniture of her once happy home, she did not experience surprise at his interruption; but she thought for the first time, with a slight degree of satisfaction, of the humble lodging that was henceforth to become their shelter and abode; feeling that there she could at least enjoy privacy, nor be thus disturbed in moments of sad, yet pious enthusiasm, by the intrusions of the careless and unfeeling.

CHAPTER VI.

It was a cruel and trying hour to Alice, when she quitted the home of her infancy.

Their destination was W——, a watering-place about a hundred miles distant from Elm Grove; a long journey under any circumstances, but to Alice full of difficulties, and almost of danger to her mother, whose state could ill bear the uneasy motion of a hack chaise, and the cold of an inclement season.

However, anxious to exert herself, and to ease her daughter of some of the anxiety which she in vain attempted to conceal, Mrs. Seymour appeared calm and collected on the morning of her de-

parture ; and without trusting herself with one look at any object which might overcome her feelings, walked firmly from her chamber to the carriage which was ready to receive her at the hall door. Not a tear betrayed the agony of her heart, although her excessive paleness, rendered more conspicuous by the widow's dress and her emaciated form, spoke volumes of suffering to those who stood around.

Many were the tears shed, and the prayers offered for the widow and her child. They were universally beloved, and every possible attention was paid them by their old servants.

The carriage was comfortably arranged; cushions and footstools were commodiously placed so as to afford Mrs. Seymour as much ease as possible ; and on first entering it, she could almost have imagined it to be her own. Sarah Browne sat upon the box, the only happy person in the group. She had received Mrs. Seymour's sanction to accompany them,

and with excessive delight she had prepared to follow their fortunes, with a really anxious hope of being useful, and of contributing to their comfort.

The dreaded moment arrived. Every thing was ready, and they left their *home*.

Alice's mind was so completely engaged in the business of arranging every thing for their departure, and in endeavouring to secure the comfort of her mother, that her grief was quite forgotten in the energy of the moment. It was not till she felt the motion of the carriage, and saw how rapidly it was carrying them away from Elm Grove, that the acute sense of her unhappiness came over her.

To an indifferent observer she might almost have been accused of want of feeling, so completely was she absorbed in preparations; and the avidity with which she assisted in packing, and her anxiety to hasten her mother into the carriage, might have confirmed the idea.

But when this was all over, and she found herself seated in a state of inactivity by her mother's side, then the reaction was most painful. She felt a cold chill rush over her whole frame ; she trembled with emotion as they passed through the gates of the park ; with streaming eyes she saw for the last time their pretty peaceful village ; and she sunk back almost fainting, when the chaise drove past the church in which was deposited the remains of her dear father. Indeed at that moment, the fortitude both of the mother and daughter gave way, and for a time neither of them attempted to check their sorrow.

Alice was the first to recover her calmness, and much did she blame herself for the weakness which had added to the sufferings of her mother.

But although she could not excuse herself, I think every one else will ; for we must reflect that poor Alice was still a mere child, and that, young as she was,

she had acted the part of a woman—had been the sole directress of every thing since her father's death. To spare Mrs. Seymour's feelings, she appeared to be endowed with supernatural understanding. She had interviews with gentlemen on the subject of business; gave up to them her mother's accounts; took inventories of their own immediate possessions at Elm Grove; and, in short, acted in every way the part of an experienced person.

All those with whom she had any transactions were delighted with the collected, sensible, and lady-like manner with which she conducted herself, and astonished with her acuteness and talent.

Alice made for herself and mother many friends by her excellent conduct, and many offers were made to them to take up their abode in the houses of those considerate persons; but Mrs. Seymour felt that her health would render her a burthen to strangers; and she was also

anxious that whilst she lived, she might see her daughter acquire habits of independence, which poverty alone could teach her. But this is a digression from my subject. I was endeavouring to excuse poor Alice's temporary weakness, by mentioning how much her mind had been upon the stretch for the last few weeks, how painfully she had been excited, and how firmly she had attempted to repress all display of affliction in the presence of her mother. But the heart cannot always contain itself: its grief must have vent, or it will break; perhaps it was fortunate for Alice, that her tears flowed freely, thus in a measure relieving her oppressed and perturbed spirit.

At the end of a fatiguing day's journey they arrived at W——, the place of their destination.

To minds occupied as theirs must have been with the fond recollection of home, and with the desolating sense of their

forlorn situation, their arrival might well prove a melancholy moment.

How unlike the welcome they were accustomed to receive! Servants hastening to throw open the spacious doors, obsequious attention, luxurious apartments, and, above all, that delicious feeling of returning *home*—to a happy and peaceful *home*!

Much has been said and written upon this favourite subject; there are very few, fortunately, who do not agree upon it, and who do not associate feelings connected with the name of home, which approach almost to a sacred nature. There is something in its name, which goes at once to the heart, and kindles a glow of delight.

What is it that comforts and animates the mind of the soldier during his wearisome campaign? It is the thought of home! What strengthens and invigorates the efforts of the toil-worn sailor?

It is the distant view of his home? He that is acquiring wealth and fame in a foreign land, suffering from the effects of climate, separated from his nearest and dearest ties, is it not all for the happiness of returning in comfort and in affluence to his home?

A home Alice and her mother had left; they had to create for themselves another upon a very different model.

It was late in the day when they arrived at W——. After some difficulty, Alice made the post-boy find out the lodging which Mr. Elliott had taken for them; but it was not until she had knocked repeatedly, that a dirty slip-shod maid appeared at the door.

“Is this the house which was taken for Mrs. Seymour?” cried Alice.

“Why, I believe there has been a first floor taken for a lodger; but I will step in and ask mistress.”

“Good heavens!” exclaimed Alice, “has nothing been prepared—no fires

lighted—nothing arranged for my mother?”

“Why, bless me, miss! you are so late, that I gave you up,” vociferated the landlady, who now made her appearance at the door; a coarse, vulgar-looking woman, not more prepossessing in her appearance than the maid who belonged to her. “Why I expected you by the six o’clock coach; and as you did not come, I thought I would not waste coals, so I let out the fire; but you can step into my parlour, till things be made a little comfortable.”

There was nothing else to be done. Alice, assisted by Sarah, almost lifted her exhausted mother out of the chaise, and supported her to the room, and placed her in a seat by the side of a very black-looking fire. The room was perfumed with the united fumes of tobacco and brandy, and a coarse-looking man was seated in full possession of the apartment.

Alice trembled with emotion. How was her mother to endure all this? She left her in order to look at their apartments, which consisted of a small bed-room and a sitting-room adjoining, and, though humble and meanly furnished, still they appeared clean. Her first care was to have a fire made in the bed-room ; she then, with Sarah, hastened to make the bed, and with the help of many cushions, which she had brought with her, she flattered herself that her mother would rest in tolerable comfort.

Mrs. Seymour was completely worn out ; and it was with difficulty she was conveyed to her chamber without fainting. With intense anxiety, poor Alice sat by her bedside, till at length fatigue, and the effects of the anodyne which had been administered to her, produced sleep, and she had the comfort of seeing her mother calmly reposing.

The longest and most miserable day

will have its end, and this wretched one at last closed ; night bringing to the unfortunate mother and daughter a few hours oblivion of their griefs.

CHAPTER VII.

THE sleep of Alice, however, was not of long duration, and her mind was too busy to remain for any length of time inactive. Her first waking feelings were not enviable. Now was the reality of all that she had anticipated! For the first time in her life she opened her eyes, without their meeting every refinement which art could invent.

Her own apartment at Elm Grove had been furnished after the taste of her father, and was a perfect *bijou*, so exquisite was its neatness and elegance.

This morning the contrast was striking. Her bed was a hard sofa, and the one on which Mrs. Seymour slept was a

camp-bed of no very large dimensions, and scantily supplied with curtains; in short, the room had altogether a lodging-house appearance, which was any thing but inviting.

Alice was fearful of disturbing her mother, therefore unwillingly remained in her bed. She longed to be up, that she might endeavour to give the sitting-room an air of something like comfort, but dreaded too much her waking.

“Sleep on, dearest mother,” sighed she, “and dream of happiness; in dreams alone, I fear, you will ever again taste of it—and yet why should I say so? God who has afflicted us, may raise us up again. On Him will I trust; and to Him I pray, that He will assist my efforts of usefulness to my mother. Has she not often told me, that ‘the path of the Christian is never one of unmixed happiness; and that He who himself put on a crown of thorns, never intended that his followers should wear a crown of

flowers. He who has told you to take up your cross and follow Him, well knew that you would not be able truly to follow him, without having daily crosses to take up. He who promised that if you suffered you should reign with Him, loves us too dearly to withhold that which is so essential to the fitting us for himself. The Christian's course is from a cross to a crown; not that we are obliged to seek misfortunes, but God forbid that we should shrink from them.'"

These reflections gave strength and comfort to the mind of Alice; and perceiving that her mother was awake, she cheerfully left her hard couch, and hastened to commence the business of the day.

With the assistance of Sarah, she contrived to give their little drawing-room a habitable appearance; their packages also had arrived from Elm Grove, and in them were many little comforts which Alice had requested for her mother.

Her great anxiety at this moment was the want of a comfortable sofa for Mrs. Seymour. The only one the apartments afforded, was that which she had converted into her bed the night before ; and she knew that her mother's emaciated form would receive no ease by reclining upon so hard and uneasy a couch. She was in no small perplexity and distress ; and at length determined to sally forth, and endeavour to purchase one. But first of all, she thought she would ask the landlady the price of such an article of furniture. To her dismay, she was told it could not be bought under at least five guineas. Poor Alice counted over the contents of her purse, and found to her sorrow, that such a sum would leave but a trifling remainder ; and they were not to expect any further remittance for a month. What was she to do ? Her eye at that moment rested upon a small box, which contained the few trinkets which they were permitted to take with

them. She opened it immediately, but hesitated when she perceived they were all gifts from her father. She took out a chain. "Dear father!" she said, kissing the little trinket, "you little imagined when you gave me this, to what use it would be applied! However," she continued, checking with an effort her rising emotion, "if you are permitted to look down upon your child, you will, I am sure, approve of this her act."

She then prepared herself to go out, determined to sell this ornament, and with the money procure a sofa for her mother.

Her first visit was to an upholsterer's shop, where she saw a sofa which she considered calculated to give her mother ease. She promised to call again in the course of half an hour; and then, with a sinking heart, bent her steps to a jeweller's, which she had before passed.

She felt that it required some courage to do what she so anxiously wished, and

faltered on the threshold of the door, almost tempted to return; but then her mother's image rose to her imagination, and she went forward with a determined step.

It was very early, and the shopmen were arranging the shop. Alice asked one of the young men if she could speak to Mr. Jackson, whose name she had seen on the door. The man said he hardly thought she could, as he did not suppose he was up, and advised her to call again. However, Alice's anxiety to get the affair settled was so great, that she begged the young man would say that a person requested particularly to speak to him.

Alice was not one who was easily to be withstood, and the shopman hastened to tell Mr. Jackson that a beautiful young lady wished to speak to him. He soon appeared, and Alice, with blushes of timidity, showed him her chain, and requested that he would become the purchaser of

it. After carefully examining it, he offered her ten pounds, a sum very short of its original price, but which she joyfully accepted, and, with a light heart, bounded out of the shop, ordered the sofa to the lodgings, and in spirits which she had not felt for weeks, returned home to continue her labours.

She did not intend to tell her mother what she had done, determining carefully to conceal from her every unnecessary care.

She found the landlady, though coarse and vulgar, good-natured and inclined to be civil; indeed the manners of Alice were so sweet and conciliating, that it must have required a heart of stone to have withstood their fascination.

Mrs. Seymour found in her beloved daughter an attentive, assiduous attendant: it was delightful to see how well she managed, and with what neatness and comfort every thing was arranged.

The mother's admiration and astonish-

ment were extreme; she knew that the will to be useful would not be wanted; but that a child who had been brought up in the lap of luxury, should be able to accommodate herself at once to so great a change, was indeed praiseworthy.

Mrs. Seymour could scarcely miss a single comfort. She would often say, "My dear Alice, remember the scantiness of our income."

Alice remembered this well, and much did she ponder upon the subject. As long as their trinkets and valuable wardrobe remained, she knew that she had always the means of obtaining a supply of money; but how to increase their pittance, was her frequent and anxious thought.

Their expenses were small, for Sarah assisted by her young mistress did every thing; and much would it have affected you to have seen this delicate Alice—this spoilt child of affluence—up before the break of day, engaged in the most menial

employments: and yet when she made her appearance by her mother's bedside, she was as she had ever been, neat and elegant in her dress, her hair nicely arranged, and looking as she used to do when she had just left the hands of an accomplished lady's-maid.

Alice fancied that her mother was ignorant of all she did for her; but she was mistaken. She well knew and fully appreciated these exertions; but she was aware that her dear child was happy in her fancied ignorance, and as long as she saw that her health and spirits were improving under this new mode of life, she did not interfere, as she felt that in all probability this beloved child must look forward to a life of exertion, and to her own energies she must be indebted for a subsistence. Harshly did this feeling grate upon the heart of the mother, and much did she struggle against the worldly ambition which had once mingled with her hopes for her beautiful, her highly-

gifted Alice. It required all the aid of Heaven to humble her spirit on this one subject ; but that aid was vouchsafed to her earnest supplications.

Mrs. Seymour had, unperceived by herself, imbibed from her husband many of his views for Alice. Although she had warned him not to make too great an idol of this child, she herself had allowed her to possess too much of her heart ; and this had induced in her an overweening desire to linger in this world. This feeling is so natural, that it is scarcely to be blamed ; but let it be a warning to us all, to endeavour to think of earthly blessings as the loans of our heavenly Father, which may be resumed whenever he thinks fit to call for them ; for doubly will be felt the pang of disappointment, if it come unlooked-for, and find us unprepared.

Little did Mrs. Seymour anticipate that poverty and labour would be the lot of Alice ; and that when she should leave

this world, to the bounty of strangers must she commit this treasure, and leave her destitute of every thing, save goodness, talent, and that one inheritance which now might be her bane—beauty, almost unsurpassed. She trembled to think what she might be exposed to in her unfriended condition, and often thought of Mr. Harcourt; while the idea that his heart might be touched, sometimes afforded her a gleam of hope; but then again the knowledge of his unbending character gave a chill to her remotest expectations.

Alice had already commenced some fancy works, which she intended to offer for sale; and Mrs. Seymour, when she was tolerably free from suffering, assisted her in these labours. Alice also exerted her talent in drawing, and her sketches were eagerly purchased at the libraries, as the genius which displayed itself in these little efforts were striking even to a common eye.

Vivid was the gleam of delight which flashed on her countenance, when she received the sum paid to her for her drawings : and the shop-keepers to whom she consigned them, could not but feel interested in the youthful, anxious being who, with so enchanting an air, received the price of her labours.

She found some difficulty in disposing of her fancy works. However, one day when she was purchasing some trifle for a little design she had in contemplation, at the shop of the jeweller I have before mentioned, she obtained unexpected assistance.

Mr. Jackson, who was himself serving her, had seemed always particularly anxious to be polite to our heroine. The circumstance of her having sold so valuable a chain, had induced him to make some inquiries about her ; and from the person in whose house they lodged, he heard enough of their history to satisfy him ; while the account of her conduct

towards her mother filled him with the warmest admiration. His kind manner towards Alice induced her to ask him if he thought he could put her into any way of disposing of her work, and with a promptness which was much to the credit of his heart, he promised to send them to a friend in London, who would, he was certain, undertake to dispose of them.

The expressive countenance of Alice, which beamed with a look of grateful joy, fully repaid him for his kindness. Mr. Jackson was himself a father, therefore he looked upon this sweet being with peculiar interest.

Alice now worked with redoubled pleasure, and her receipts were very useful in their little establishment.

In the present system of education, work is, I am sorry to say, much neglected. There is so much to be done, so many accomplishments to acquire, that this most essential, most truly feminine acquirement is too often completely over-

looked. In my opinion it is nearly of first-rate importance to give to every young female a taste and facility in this neglected art. In whatever situation of life a woman is destined to move, it has its use. To some as an amusement, to others as a most necessary and useful acquirement. It teaches neatness and arrangement, and in the confined life which it is the lot of most women to lead, it occupies many an idle moment, which might otherwise be listlessly squandered. In illness it is a resource, and in many cases it has been the means of procuring an addition to a limited income.

I would advise every mother to cultivate a taste for work in her daughter in whatever situation she may be ; for although she may never be called upon as Alice was, to work for her bread, yet I am convinced that, in a general way, no part of a woman's education becomes more useful to her as a mother and mistress of a family, than a lady-like use of her needle.

CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. SEYMOUR had been tolerably free from any severe attack since her arrival at W—, and Alice was really flattering herself that she was deriving benefit from the sea air, when her hopes were frustrated by her mother being seized by a violent paroxysm of her disorder.

She struggled with the disease for some days, in the hope of its abating without the aid of medical advice; but at last yielded to the earnest prayers of her daughter to send for a physician.

Alice sent to Mr. Jackson to request that he would recommend the most skillful practitioner the place afforded, and

accordingly Dr. Wilmot arrived almost immediately, and administered successfully to Mrs. Seymour's present sufferings.

She had a private interview with him, and fully convinced the worthy doctor that she was perfectly aware how completely hopeless was her case, which it was impossible for him to deny ; he, however, assured her, that the danger was not immediate.

“ My life is now of the utmost importance to my child, and I would for her sake gladly prolong it ;” said Mrs. Seymour to the sensible and feeling physician ; “ but Alice must not be totally blind to my danger. Her affection towards me, poor child ! is so completely engrossing, that should I be removed suddenly from this world, God only knows how she would be able to support the blow. Pray, Sir, be kind enough, gently, to prepare her for my danger.”

Dr. Wilmot promised that he would do

so ; but when he went into the next room, and found the anxious girl pale with emotion and suspense, his heart failed him, and he could not give the cruel blow.

He had been prepared to be interested in the widow and her daughter ; but their appearance and manners far surpassed what he expected to meet. After some conversation with Alice he took his leave, and on her offering a fee, he accepted it, but added, that in future they must consider him as a friend ; and scarcely a day passed that he did not visit them, proving by his kindness a most valuable consolation.

When Alice returned to her mother's room, Mrs. Seymour immediately perceived that nothing had been said to give her pain ; on the contrary, she appeared in high spirits, full of praise of the kind Doctor Wilmot, and with all the buoyancy of hope, so easily excited in the breast of youth, she repeated what he had said upon the subject of the efficacy of warm sea-

baths to persons labouring under the same complaint as the one from which Mrs. Seymour suffered.

Her mother smiled, but shook her head ; Alice's countenance fell, and tears were rushing to her eyes : Mrs. Seymour kissed her ; she could not bear to chace those smiles which were like gleams of sunshine to her heart.

The mind of Alice, however, was full of the idea of the warm baths, and she could talk of nothing else, until Mrs. Seymour said,—“ My dear child, I do not think they would be of much service to me ; besides which, you are not aware, my love, of the expense of such a remedy ; I could not afford to try it.”

An expression of deep sadness passed over the countenance of Alice, her spirits were subdued, and she could not exert herself to be cheerful during the rest of the day.

The succeeding morning Mrs. Seymour was considerably better, and she desired

Alice to take a little walk, as she looked pale from the confinement which she had endured during her illness.

Alice always implicitly obeyed her mother ; she therefore, although busily employed in finishing a drawing, instantly prepared for her usual walk, which was up and down the row of houses where they lived.

After having walked some time, she recollected that she wanted some pencils at a shop in the next street, and determined to go thither.

Whilst passing by a house she heard the sound of a well-known piece of music played upon a piano-forte ; the window was partly open, and attracted by the sound, she looked in, and saw a young lady seated at the instrument, and a master instructing her.

Curiosity, or some other impulse, led her to look at the name on the door-plate, and she saw inscribed upon it, "Mr. Turner, Professor of Music."—"I wish

I could obtain some scholars!" sighed Alice to herself; "Mama might then afford to take some baths."

At the shop where she purchased her drawing materials, she made some inquiries respecting Mr. Turner, and learnt that he was employed by the first families in the place, and that he was at that moment in some distress, having lost his assistant; and his business was so extensive that he could not possibly go on without one.

A new light darted into the mind of Alice. Might not she offer herself in that capacity?

This idea had now seized upon her imagination, and she could think of nothing else, while it even prevented her sleeping. She turned her plan over in her own mind in a thousand ways, and at last determined to call upon Mr. Turner, and offer herself to him as his assistant. She remembered that her music-master in London had one who used to instruct the

beginners ; and although conscious pride whispered to her, that her abilities were equal to *any* pupil, gladly would she undertake any species of drudgery which could secure to her so great a reward.

The next day she proposed taking her accustomed walk, and with a beating heart went to the house of Mr. Turner, knocked, and was immediately admitted and shown into a sitting-room. The first objects which met her eye, were a grand piano-forte and harp ; she was ashamed of the weakness of which she felt herself guilty, in being overcome by the sight of these inanimate objects : but Alice was enthusiastically fond of music ; and there was something connected with it which always brought her father to her recollection, as she had not seen an instrument since she left Elm Grove.

Mr. Turner soon entered the room, and requested to know her business with him. Alice conquered her rising emotion, and immediately entered upon the subject,

which was so near her heart. She told him, without any disguise, that she was anxious to be of use to her mother, who was in distressed circumstances ; and then proposed herself to him as his assistant in teaching music.

Mr. Turner looked still more surprised. Alice appeared so very young, that he doubted whether she was equal to such an undertaking, and he hesitated, not knowing what to say, for he saw her look of suspense and hope, and felt sorry to grieve her. But what was to be done ? —it was cruel to raise expectations which he did not imagine he could realize. He then said, he feared the situation would be too much for her—that he required an experienced person, and that her extreme youth would be an obstacle ; in short, he endeavoured as kindly as possible to get rid of her ; but Alice was not so soon to be repulsed.

“ Sir,” she said, imploringly ; “ I am obliged to speak for myself, for there is

no one here to whom I can apply for a reference ; but if you will consent to hear me play, I believe you will consider me no contemptible performer on the harp, the piano-forte, or the guitar. My masters"—and here she mentioned the distinguished names of her instructors—"will, I am sure, if you think it necessary to apply to them, speak favourably of Miss Seymour. Will you allow me to play to you?"

She then went to the harp and commenced a prelude ; but here again the spirits of Alice gave way : the sound she produced was to her excited feelings like the voice of her father speaking to her from his grave. She in vain endeavoured to proceed ; she faltered and hesitated, and at last burst into a violent flood of tears.

Mr. Turner, wholly unprepared for such a scene, was quite at a loss what to do. He saw by her appearance that she was in a superior situation of life ; and,

possessed of a compassionate disposition, he felt grieved for the sorrow which she exhibited, and could not avoid being immediately interested by her great beauty and extreme youth. He thought he had better call his wife, who he imagined might be more able to calm her agitation. He accordingly brought Mrs. Turner into the room, who, in the most maternal manner, endeavoured to sooth the weeping girl; and her kind efforts were soon successful.

Alice then apologized for the trouble she had occasioned, and requested Mrs. Turner would only listen to her for a few moments. She then briefly told her the outlines of her sad story, mentioned how much pains and trouble had been bestowed upon her musical talents, and how fervently she wished now to make them the means of benefiting her mother's situation.

Mrs. Turner was affected by this touching and artless tale. She had once a daughter, who was taken from them at

the age of Alice ; and the remembrance of this child, recalled to Mrs. Turner's mind by the appearance of our heroine, powerfully excited her sympathy. She took her husband aside, and a few words said in a low tone appeared to have an instantaneous effect upon his feelings ; for he approached Alice with much kindness, and said, " My dear young lady, I shall be happy to hear you play, that I may judge of your musical abilities."

Mrs. Turner knew well how to move his heart with compassion towards this amiable girl. She had merely whispered to him—" Our poor Mary was just her age : had she lived, and had she been deprived of you, might not her situation have been similar to the one before us ?" She had struck the right chord, and it vibrated to his heart !

Alice instantly obeyed the summons, and no weakness interfered this time with her performance. Mr. Turner listened to her with delight and surprise ; he had

never heard so exquisite a private performer ; genius shone resplendent, aided by a scientific knowledge of the art.

When she had finished a most brilliant piece of music on the harp, she opened the piano, and equally charmed him upon that instrument ; and concluded by singing in so sweet a manner, that it was Mr. Turner now who was affected ; and when he looked at the young and almost inspired musician before him, he could scarcely controul tears of admiration and pity. Her father must indeed have been proud of such a child, and her mother—what an anxious treasure she must now be to her !

Mr. Turner was now fully aware how valuable her services would be to him, and gladly proposed terms, which to her appeared riches. Joyfully did her animated countenance beam, and gratefully did she press the hand of Mrs. Turner for her kind intercession in her behalf. The good woman felt already great affection

for her young acquaintance, and rejoiced in the happiness to which she had been instrumental.

The only object now to be gained was her mother's sanction to the plan. Alice trembled a little when she thought of proposing it to her, and felt a misgiving at her heart that she would not approve of it; however, hoping she might eventually combat her objections, she hastened home.

Mrs. Seymour had been alarmed by the length of her absence, and immediately saw by her flushed complexion that something unusual had occurred. In dread she questioned her, and Alice told her story.

I shall leave the result of her communication for my next chapter; but Alice suffered no slight degree of suspense until the next morning, Mrs. Seymour having told her that she must have time to consider so important a subject.

CHAPTER IX.

ALTHOUGH the mind of Mrs. Seymour was unaffectedly humble in every thing which concerned herself, feeling that fortune, rank, and genius were rich gifts, though, as appertaining to this world, perishable and of secondary consideration ; but even supposing them less fluctuating and evanescent—throwing as they do a certain degree of splendour round a child of dust ; still must his dependence and feebleness be felt and betrayed. She knew that unqualified submission to the will of God is a most positive duty ; why should she then feel faint under this tribulation ? Why should she, who so solemnly recog-

nized the authority, wisdom, and goodness of God, shrink from this trial?

It was the latent feeling of maternal pride and of situation, the last spark of that passion left in her heart; but it was to be extinguished, and Mrs. Seymour felt that it was not to be done without a struggle.

Alice was now about to enter the world; not as once she had fondly anticipated, surrounded by all the advantages which her station in life would have secured to her; but alone and unprotected, in the humble situation of a teacher of music.

It was not altogether from that small portion of venal pride which still mingled with her better feelings; but it was maternal solicitude which filled the heart of Mrs. Seymour with overwhelming anguish. She remembered the excessive beauty of her child, her talents; and instead of its producing those feelings of delight which they formerly created in her breast, they

tortured her imagination. To what temptations they might now expose her !

How often are we called upon to witness the destruction of our fondest wishes and our brightest hopes ! Our dreams of earthly happiness vanish as the morning dew, and mortal comforts drop like withering flowers ; but in the midst of his judgments the Almighty “remembereth mercy,” and he who could convey unseen supplies into “the little cruise,” and who suffered not “the barrel of meal to fail,” can still speak comfort to the sorrowing heart. Mrs. Seymour looked up to heaven for support, and soon her heart felt soothed and comforted ; and she was able to say, “Not my will, O Lord, but thine be done.” O then, when woes gather round us, and calamities pour in like a full tide, let us with confidence “lay hold on God ;”—let us remember that even these bitter sorrows are administered by the hand of infinite love, that we may be brought to him.

Mrs. Seymour, in the solitude of her chamber, humbled and brought low her heart ; and in that *one* night of severe conflict, gained a victory over her last remaining human frailty. She gave her child completely to the care of her heavenly Parent, and she felt secure in his love. Afflictions she knew might be the lot of Alice, privations and humiliations ; but she hoped and prayed that they might all tend to the improvement of her heart. She thanked God for the virtuous feelings which beamed in every action of her daughter, and trusted that blessings might accompany her undertakings.

Precious indeed are the privileges of those who cast all their cares upon God. “ The earth may shake, the pillars of the world may tremble under us, the countenance of the heavens may be appalled, the sun may lose his light, the moon its beauty, and the stars their glory ; but concerning the man who trusteth in God, he knows in whom he has believed ; he is

not ignorant whose precious blood has been shed for him ; he hath a shepherd full of kindness, full of care, full of power."

When Mrs. Seymour saw her daughter the next morning, she told her, that she might "go and prosper;" requesting, however, that she might have an interview with Mr. Turner, previous to her entering upon her new employment.

Mr. Turner promptly obeyed her summons; and Mrs. Seymour, in that earnest manner which a parent alone can appreciate, commended her child to his care, and he promised with sincerity to watch over her, and to be most careful of the society into which she should be thrown.

Alice is now before us as the active assistant of Mr. Turner. Patient, indefatigable, and clever, her whole energies were exerted in the business. At first, her extreme youth surprised and disappointed the parents and friends of her pupils; it appeared impossible that one so

young could have the patience necessary for so arduous an employment. But Alice was possessed of the sweetest temper; and her love for children was so great, that she made every allowance for any little want of attention or ability which she discovered in her scholars. Her kindness won all their hearts, and she made the lessons so agreeable, that her arrival was hailed in every family as a moment of pleasure. Her method was also excellent, therefore the progress they made was generally so rapid as to delight the parents, and to secure for her the highest encomiums from Mr. Turner, whose pride in his young protégée every day became greater. Her instruction was not confined to the younger branches of Mr. Turner's pupils. She taught the harp to many who were more advanced, and the guitar without any other assistance, as there was no one but herself in W—— who gave lessons upon that instrument. She might have been constantly employed; but Mrs.

Seymour, fearing lest her health should suffer, insisted on her labours being abridged.

Alice's spirits were never better than at this present moment. The income which she derived from her exertions, enabled her to add so much to the comfort of her mother, that her satisfaction was unbounded.

To please her daughter, Mrs. Seymour consented to take the warm baths ; and also, when the weather permitted, she gratified her child by going out in a little carriage at an hour when she was unoccupied, and could accompany her mother ; and poor Alice fed herself with the delightful hope that she was really improving in health.

Mrs. Seymour endeavoured to think so also : her dear child she saw so tremblingly anxious upon the subject—so devoted to her interest, that she would have been ungrateful to her love, if she had not appeared to appreciate those advan-

tages which she laboured to acquire for her. To reward her for her filial piety, Mrs. Seymour always endeavoured to look cheerful when she returned home after the fatigue of teaching ; and as Alice was not with her mother for a great portion of the day, she flattered herself that this cheerfulness was the result of improved health.

Sarah Browne was now of the utmost use to Mrs. Seymour. In the absence of Alice she sat with her, and she soon discovered that she possessed a fund of good sense and acuteness. Mrs. Seymour took pains to improve her mind, and never was there a more grateful being than Sarah. Her attachment to her mistress and her daughter was sincere ; and her great fear was, that she did not do enough for them ; and when she witnessed the labours of Alice, she felt dissatisfied with her own efforts.

I wish you would now pause and make a few reflections upon the subject before

you, my young readers, and you particularly, my dear children. I make no doubt that there are few, if any, of those who will read this little book, who are not enjoying the advantages of a careful education—whose parents are not doing every thing in their power to make you well-informed and accomplished. To some the power of bestowing an expensive education is easy ; affluence and opportunity may facilitate the undertaking : but to others the case is different. How often do we see parents sacrificing every thing to the benefit of their children ; curtailing their own comforts, altering their habits of life, with the anxious hope of rendering their children distinguished members of society ; and how constantly do we see the gifts of education perverted and thrown away ! After hundreds have been spent upon a young person, of what avail is the useless expenditure of time and trouble ? On quitting the school-room, most of the hard-earned knowledge and

accomplishments are left behind as useless and troublesome to the possessor, or if carried away, are often made use of merely as ornamental trappings to attract admiration. Not generally, I grieve to say, do these acquirements serve to improve the mind, or prove the solace of those parents who have been the means of bestowing them. Superior intellectual endowments, talents, and accomplishments, are all precious gifts, of which a solemn account must be one day rendered. We ought not to be satisfied with the mere possession of these treasures, but be anxious to apply them to their legitimate purpose. Let us keep in mind the parable of the ten talents ; it furnishes a powerful stimulus, and an awful warning to the highly gifted.

To Alice, how rich were the treasures of a cultivated mind !—how truly did she estimate these talents, the gift of her God, “ as pearls of great price !” No vanity mingled with these feelings ; she knew

that she possessed them, and blessed the hand which had bestowed such treasures.

The lot of Alice may not resemble yours; but that is no reason why you should not cultivate habits of active usefulness; and beware of imagining, because you can yet do little in the service of your fellow-creatures, that you are therefore justified in doing nothing. We none of us know when the evil days may come.

To you who are in the higher stations of life, your talents are as valuable as to you who are in a less exalted sphere; and to the Almighty, the account you will have to give will be the same. Whether your portion of talents is liberal or scanty, the obligation to cultivate *that portion* is precisely equal; and the same awful consequences must arise from their neglect or perversion.

CHAPTER X.

ALICE, in her different walks from the several houses of her pupils, had frequently met an old gentleman who attracted her attention from the extraordinary manner in which he observed her, as well as from her having some recollection of his figure, though she could not recall where she had before seen him. Absorbed, as her mind generally was, in the business with which she was about to be engaged, she could not avoid being both embarrassed and distressed by his earnest gaze ; sometimes she almost felt afraid, as he appeared to watch her movements and often followed her.

She did not mention the circumstance

to her mother, from the fear of alarming her ; but it made her almost dread the time when she was obliged to leave the house.

One day, as she was giving a lesson to a young lady, he entered the room. Alice felt an involuntary shudder, and concealed herself as much as possible behind her pupil and the harp. But this did not shield her from the observation of her tormentor, who walked up to her, and said in a most abrupt manner, " Well, which do you think the most agreeable—teaching or being a fine lady ?"

Alice trembled, and was silent. The unfeeling man then proceeded to say, " How is your mother ?"

Alice answered, in a low voice, that she was pretty well.

" You need not answer me as if you thought I was going to eat you up," he said, most harshly. " You ought to be much obliged to me for troubling myself about your mother."

The indignant feelings of Alice were now roused. The slightest disrespect offered to her mother produced sparks of anger, which nothing else could have ignited. She coloured, but did not reply ; although her beautiful and expressive eyes flashed with a moment's fire, which was, however, almost immediately extinguished by a flood of tears.

She felt that she was for the first time in her life subjected to the insults of strangers, and that her unprotected situation exposed her to such an indignity.

The lady, in whose house she was teaching, looked surprised and angry, and said, " I believe, Sir, your business is with me, and I shall esteem it a favour if you will not interrupt my daughter's lesson ;" and then taking him into an adjoining room, she gave a slight outline of the history of Alice, finishing by speaking highly in her praise, and mentioned with much admiration her devoted attention and beautiful behaviour towards her sick mo-

ther. The strange man listened with attention, and when the lady had finished speaking, walked abruptly out of the room.

Mrs. M—— then went to Alice, and taking her kindly by the hand, said, “My dear Miss Seymour, I hope you have not been distressed by that eccentric being. No one minds his coarse speeches; and the only way to manage him is not to appear to feel his disagreeable manner.”

Notwithstanding the kindness of her friends, Alice prepared to return home with spirits much depressed. This was her first lesson, poor child, in humility. Her heart was not accustomed to the frowns of the world, for hitherto she had but met the smile of encouragement.

“Wealth is power,” and fortune had secured for her every thing that it produces; therefore, perhaps without knowing it, Alice may have been a little spoilt by its deluding influence. There might have been a small portion of pride—of

self-esteem still clinging to her heart; however, nothing so forcibly corrects the mind, or gives such premature experience, as adversity.

On her return to her home, she was obliged to pass the public walk. There she saw happy children; some walking with their parents, some with their governesses, seemingly full of life and happiness. She looked at them with feelings almost of envy. Some of the younger little ones were sporting on the sands, some with their hoops, others upon donkeys. The scene was altogether one of enjoyment. She felt angry with herself for the feelings which it excited in her breast; but in the gloomy mood which pervaded her spirits at this moment, every thing appeared to conspire to give her pain, and to overwhelm her. Just then, she saw at the door of a house she was passing, a young girl joyfully equipped for a ride, her eyes sparkling with pleasure. By her side stood a gentleman, whom Alice supposed

must be her father. Presently a pony was led to the door, with other horses, and she saw the happy girl lifted upon it by her father, and, accompanied by him, she saw her gallop off. With what parental pride did the gentleman look at his little girl! and with what respectful attention did the old groom watch the movements of his young mistress!

Did this little scene recall any recollections in the heart of Alice? Yes, poor child! with eyes streaming with tears, she stood fascinated to the spot.

“Happy girl!” said she, “may you never lose the blessings you enjoy. If you only knew what it was to want a father’s care and love, how would you prize every look, every word from that loved being; you would consider every moment sacred which you passed in his society; never would you afflict him by the slightest fault. How doubly bitter—how insupportable would my feelings now be, if I could recall any act of mine

which has caused sorrow to my father !
God in his mercy has spared me that
misery !”

She went home with a head-ache, caused by the agitation of her spirits. This formed an excuse for her going early to bed ; and it was in the silence of her chamber, that Alice took a retrospective view of the events of the past day ; and she felt that she was still deficient of one great requisite for her present state of life. She knew that if she was possessed of a greater portion of deep humility, she would be better able to go through the trials which it had pleased the Almighty should be her lot. She felt that her pride had been mortified, and from the existence of that feeling much of what she had experienced had arisen. She knew that she must have nothing to do with such a passion, in order that she might be proof against every trial in future.

The arrows which would tear and ran-

kle in the heart where pride is cherished, fall harmless at the feet of the humble. They are strangers to the painful conflicts, the hourly provocations, the thousand heart-aches, to which pride is exposed. Earnestly then, my children, do I recommend to your cultivation that Christian quality, humility. I entreat you to believe that it is peculiarly advantageous to an age, when little knowledge and no experience can have been acquired ; and that it will contribute essentially to your happiness and estimation in society. It will spare you from many a painful feeling, and shield you from the attacks of scorn.

The next morning Mr. Turner arrived early to inform Alice that he had another pupil for her, who was the only daughter of Lord and Lady G——; and begged she would meet him at their house at twelve o'clock.

At that hour she went to the house, to which Mr. Turner had directed her ;

and felt pleasure in discovering in her new scholar, the interesting girl she had observed the preceding day with so much emotion ; indeed, her introduction to this family proved a permanent source of advantage and happiness to our heroine.

Lord and Lady G—— were both excellent people, and their daughter Lady Emma was a charming girl. They had been unfortunate in losing many children, and this one daughter, and a son some years older, who was at college, were their only remaining treasures ; but Lady Emma's health was very delicate, and this was to them a source of considerable anxiety, rendered more acute by the losses they had already sustained.

Alice spared no pains to improve her knowledge of music ; and every day appeared to add new strength to the interest her new friends felt for the young instructress ; and her attachment and admiration for them was great.

One morning, after the music lessons

were over, Lady G——, in the course of conversation, inquired of Alice whether she knew of any good dancing-master, as she wished Lady Emma to have some instructions. Alice was not able to give any information upon the subject; but she could not help making many reflections on the question. She thought of her own abilities in that art, and well recollected a speech of D'Egville's, which he had more than once made to her. "*O ! quel dommage que vous soyez, Mademoiselle Seymour, vous feriez ma fortune si vous n'étiez qu'une pauvre fille.*"*

Why should she not offer her services to Lady Emma? She was sure she would be able to teach her very well, after all the pains and expense which had been bestowed upon her dancing.

She recollected finding in some of their packages from Elm Grove, the little tamborine with which she used to perform a

* This speech was really made by Monsieur D'Egville to a young friend of the Author.

dance—that well-known, graceful *pas seul*, very familiar to all Monsieur D'Egville's pupils; and on the following day prepared herself for dancing, modestly telling Lady G—— that should her style be approved by her, most happy should she be to do her best to instruct Lady Emma.

Accompanied by Mr. Turner, whose assistance she had requested to play for her, she commenced the dance in which D'Egville had taken so much pains to perfect her. As she stood, scarcely touching the ground she trod upon, with the tamborine gracefully held above her head, she seemed a model of youthful grace; and her description recalls to my "mind's eye" another of the professor's scholars whom I once knew. She was a beautiful girl about fifteen, tall and elegantly formed, graceful and sylph-like in every movement; she used to dance in order to delight a doating mother, who

did not, alas! live to see this opening bud expand to full perfection, but was snatched by the hand of mercy from this world of disappointment.

Alice acquitted herself of this performance in a manner which surprised and delighted Lady G——, who joyfully accepted her proposal of teaching her daughter. Indeed, so great an acquisition did she consider her, that willingly would she have made it worth her while to have given up all her time to Lady Emma; but Alice would not in gratitude desert her kind friend, Mr. Turner, to whom her services were invaluable, and whose goodness to her had been almost parental; besides this, she could not spare more time from her mother, who would greatly miss her.

Alice continued often to meet the extraordinary old gentleman who had so deeply annoyed her; but she had schooled her heart from feeling any further resent-

ment against him, and she fancied that his countenance was less severe, and that he looked at her with more kindness.

One day she was purchasing some grapes for her mother, and he entered the shop. He watched her for some time, and at last said, "You seem very particular in your choice of those grapes ; I suppose you are very fond of them."

Alice could scarcely forbear smiling at this abrupt question, but answered civilly, "They are not for myself, Sir."

"Who are they for, then?" he inquired hastily.

"My mother ;" and she looked grave as she replied, recollecting his manner of speaking of her mother on a former occasion.

"How is your mother?" added he, in a kind tone of voice.

"She is only pretty well," sighed Alice.

"And does she really like grapes?"

"Very much, Sir ; they are the only

nourishment she at all relishes ; indeed, she eats very little else. Tea and jellies are her chief support."

"I believe you are a good girl, after all!" exclaimed this eccentric being; "and I will thank you not to look so frightened at me in future. Perhaps some of these days you will know more of me. Good day." And he walked off, leaving Alice surprised, and almost amused by his abruptness and singularity.

A few days after, a most splendid supply of grapes were sent to Mrs. Seymour, and a chest of expensive tea. The porter who delivered them was desired to say that they came from a friend. The suspicions of Alice immediately reverted to the "old gentleman;" but as she had never mentioned him to her mother, she forbore to make any remarks. From this time they were regularly supplied with choice fruit.

CHAPTER XI.

IF Mrs. Seymour had now an anxiety about her daughter, it was lest she should be rendered vain ; for her talents, her beauty, and modesty, and, above all, the devotion which she evinced towards her mother, rendered her very conspicuous in W——. Every one was desirous to secure her instruction for their daughters, as she was looked upon as a species of prodigy ; while the most enthusiastic compliments, and refined flattery, were poured into her innocent ear.

Alice, with all her perfections, could not quite pass through this ordeal without being a little infected with that feel-

ing which is so inherent in human nature—I mean vanity. Admiration is such luxurious food, that although an acquired taste, it becomes at last necessary to the happiness of those who have partaken largely of its delights.

Much did Mrs. Seymour dread this for her child, who in many instances, by some little word, betrayed a token that adulation had made a slight impression upon her mind. We must not think harshly of our Alice for betraying this weakness; perfection cannot be expected in any mortal, much less in a girl of fifteen.

Mrs. Seymour watched for an opportunity to admonish her upon this subject, and to open her eyes to the weakness and emptiness of vanity.

One morning when she was dressing, her mother, who was in bed, heard her say, “ Sarah, I think I must curl my hair. I heard a lady say to another, she thought I should look so well in ringlets. Do you know, that I had not the least idea

I was good-looking ; but I suppose I must be, for I often now hear people say so." And immediately she walked to the glass, and examined her beautiful features with much complacency.

"What did I hear you say?" inquired Mrs. Seymour. Alice blushed, and for the first time in her life, felt ashamed to encounter her mother's eye.

"Mama, I was talking great nonsense ; but I really did not think that you were listening to me."

"Alice, come here and sit down by me, and let me have a little conversation with you. I am sorry to hear you say, that you uttered any sentiment which you would rather I should not have heard ; for much does it grieve me to think, my Alice—my almost perfect child—could possess a feeling which I should condemn. I have seen for some time with uneasiness, that the applause of the world has elated you ; for believe me, my child, it is a dangerous feeling. You have been

to me more than a daughter, and your conduct has been such as to command the warmest gratitude from your mother. I flattered myself that you would have been satisfied by knowing that you possessed her approbation ; but I grieve to see that the admiration of others is a source of such pleasure, and that to hear your virtues extolled has become so great a gratification. Vanity is a frailty which clings to the human heart ; the wisest persons are liable to it ; and with a vitality which seems to baffle every effort, it is closely interwoven with our nature. But what is it that we are vain of ? Are we not beings of yesterday, whose days on earth are but a shadow ? The sport of an accident—the victim of disease—the prey of death : and is not vanity in such a being, with faculties thus bounded, with powers thus feeble, most absurd and wicked ? Seek that feeling of satisfaction which your consciousness of doing right will afford you. Seek the praise of God,

and not of man. Consider the gifts of beauty, talent, and health, as gifts kindly bestowed from above; and those on whom Providence has showered a profusion of its blessings, let them rejoice with trembling; "for unto whom much is given, much shall be required." Let me entreat you, my child, to guard against the folly of vanity. It would disturb my dying moments, to imagine that I should leave you in the world with such a foible clinging to your nature. Extinguish every spark of it, and remember what a short-lived reign has beauty. Look at me, and view an example of this truth. In the faded form before you, do you see any resemblance to your blooming self? And yet a few years back I was equally fair."

"O say no more!" exclaimed Alice, in bitter grief; "your daughter is fully punished for her presumptuous folly. I feel my weakness thoroughly, and all my life this lesson will, I hope, be impressed upon my mind."

“That is all I wish, my dear child. I have in sorrow said what I knew would grieve you ; but it was done to save you from future mortifications, and in the hope of preserving you, as you have ever yet been, humble and diffident of your own merits.”

Alice required no further admonition. The words of her mother sank deep into her heart, and adulation lost all charms for her. Indeed, never did flattery reach her ear, without calling forth the blush of shame ; she recollected her mother’s impressive warning, and felt humbled.

On her return home one day, Alice was surprised by seeing some unusual confusion in the furniture of their apartment ; but soon the reason for the change met her eyes, they rested upon a beautiful small cabinet piano-forte, a harp in a case, and a guitar. She gazed in surprise, and then ran to examine these valuable arrivals.

“Where did they come from, mama?” was her first exclamation.

“Indeed, Alice, I am as ignorant as you are upon the subject. Some hours ago, they were brought to the house by some men, who said these beautiful instruments were for Miss Seymour, and that they were desired to deliver the keys of the cases into no other hands but her’s. I told them that I would take care that you should receive them, and with that assurance they were satisfied; however, they would not tell the name of their employer.”

Alice, in great delight, hastened to unpack the harp; but, on taking off its various covers, how great was her surprise on immediately recognizing that it was her own—her very own! Her name was upon it, in gilt letters, done by the desire of her father before it left Erard’s shop. Her dear harp! She with tears beheld it; and when she threw her arms around it, to strike a chord, she kissed it

with childish eagerness, as if she had found a lost friend. The guitar also proved to be the one she had left at Elm Grove ; and on opening a box which accompanied the instruments, she found all her music.

She felt richer than she had ever done before in her whole life ; and could do nothing else but examine her treasures. "But who could have sent them ?" she repeated over and over again ; and Mrs. Seymour joined in expressing her wonder. They wrote to Mr. Elliott, not thinking he had sent these rich gifts, for the failure of the banking-house had equally reduced him, with themselves, but from the idea that he might throw some light upon the subject ; however, he could afford them no information, and they were obliged to be content to remain in ignorance.

Alice was made very happy by these acquisitions ; for not only were they a source of great improvement to her, but the most perfect delight to her mother.

When her Alice sang to her, her mind, ever wrapt in the contemplation of a future state, felt almost elevated to heaven. She experienced a foretaste of its delights, when, during an interval of her sufferings, she reclined upon a sofa, and with her eyes fixed upon the angel form of her daughter, she heard her pour forth almost celestial strains.

The voice of Alice was rich and full, and possessed all that wild thrill of melody so peculiar to the note of the young.

In the present state of Mrs. Seymour's feelings, sacred music was her chief solace; and Alice, whose only happiness was endeavouring to soothe her mother's sorrows, adapted the following beautiful hymn of Moore's to music, to which Mrs. Seymour used to listen until tears of devotion flowed from her eyes.

“ Oh ! Thou, who dry'st the mourner's tears,
How dark this world would be ;
If, when deceived and wounded here,
We did not fly to Thee !

The friends who in our sunshine live,
When winter comes are flown !
And he who has but tears to give,
Must weep those tears alone.

But thou wilt heal the broken heart
Which, like the plants that throw
Their fragrance from the wounded part,
Breathes sweetness out of woe.

When joy no longer soothes and cheers,
And e'en the hope that threw
A moment's sparkle o'er our tears
Is dimm'd and vanished too.

Oh ! who could bear life's stormy doom,
Did not thy wing of love
Come brightly wafting thro' the gloom,
Our peace-branch from above ?"

What a balm to the afflicted heart is
the sincere exercise of devotion ! It
comes with "healing on its wings," diffus-
ing comfort to the wounded spirit. Had
it not been for this renovating influence,
how could Mrs. Seymour have borne up
under her sufferings ? She felt that her

strength was gradually declining, and that her last hour rapidly drew near. She saw that Alice would not acknowledge her danger ; although in the tearful eye, which was sometimes fixed upon her mother's countenance, Mrs. Seymour hoped she perceived a sense of the dreaded evil. Indeed, poor Alice could not any longer deceive herself. She witnessed her mother's suppressed sufferings, saw what sleepless nights she passed, and read in the doctor's face a confirmation of her worst fears.

To leave her mother, as she was obliged to do, was misery. But what was to be done ? They almost existed upon the fruits of her labours ; for the scanty allowance made to them by the creditors was most irregularly paid.

Where was Mr. Harcourt all this time ? Did he never bestow a thought, or melt with compassion, at the hard fate of his amiable and excellent sister, and of her innocent child ? Or is he as hard-hearted

and inflexible as ever ; seeking for himself that treasure which “ moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal ?”

We must hope that he will relent, and that through the mercy of God, his mind may be softened ; and that neglected opportunities, and omitted duties, may not have occasion to stand in formidable array against him, “ when the judgment shall be set, and the books opened.” Let us hope that his unchristian errors of temper and conduct may be amended ; and that he may still be allowed time to glorify God, by the cultivation and increase of those duties enjoined by the gospel ; by efforts to diffuse comfort to his fellow-creatures, to soothe their sorrows, and to infuse hope into the fainting heart.

CHAPTER XII.

THE spirits of Alice had become much depressed. She went through the regular routine of her business with her accustomed sweetness and attention, but the cheerfulness that accompanied her labours was gone.

Mrs. Seymour had become so perceptibly worse, during the last week, that Alice could no longer find a pretext for indulging in those hopes, which so long had buoyed up her young heart, and kept it from despondency. Lady Emma, who loved her youthful governess with the affection of a tender sister, felt sincerely for her sorrow; and was seconded by

Lady G—— in her kind efforts to sooth her grief. Every offer of service was made by this amiable family ; and every little delicacy sent to the invalid, which was considered likely to support her strength and tempt her appetite.

One day, Alice arrived at Lady G——'s in a most depressed state, having witnessed a night of intense agony spent by her mother. She told her ladyship that her mother had desired her to say, that if it was not trespassing too much, she requested a few minutes' conversation with her that day. Lady G—— instantly signified her compliance with this request, and her readiness to go at any hour.

The fact was, that Mrs. Seymour knew that her exhausted frame was on the point of sinking under the pressure of disease, and she was anxious to secure for her poor child the protection of a friend. Could she be certain that Alice would be sheltered from the temptations and miseries of the world, and hold a situation, however

humble, in a family of so much worth, she could die in peace. She also wished to tell Lady G—— that Alice had an uncle upon whom she ought to have claims ; and that perhaps urged by persons of weight and high rank, and so conspicuous for real goodness, that he might be brought to a sense of at least justice. His fortune was enormous ; and a portion, the absence of which he could not miss, would keep his niece from want and in respectability.

Much had the mother to say, which could only be addressed to one who was herself a parent ; and she had fortunately met with one whose heart and sympathy were alive to the distress caused by maternal anguish. “ Her heart had known its own bitterness ;” Lady G—— had lost several beautiful and amiable children : some who had nearly reached the age of womanhood. One girl had been spared to her, and by her love and anxiety for

this treasure, deeply did she enter into the maternal solicitude of Mrs. Seymour.

She went to her at the hour that was appointed, and found her reclining upon a sofa, supported by pillows. Alice was seated near her, reading from the Bible. Mrs. Seymour had selected some of the concluding chapters of St. John ; passages so soothing to the mind of the dying Christian. Alice, in tears, was just reading these words : “ Father, the hour is come. Glorify thy Son, that thy Son may also glorify thee.”

The scene which presented itself to Lady G—— was of a most affecting nature. Mrs. Seymour was paler than monumental marble ; and her transparent complexion, shrouded by her widow’s cap, and rendered more conspicuous by her sable dress, startled the beholder on the first view. It appeared almost as if the dread fiat had already gone forth, and that death had even now seized upon its

victim. Alice, our sweet heroine, looked the picture of woe, although struggling with her grief.

“O’er the pale couch she hung with filial care,
And pluck’d the thorn disease had planted there ;
Sweetness of soul beyond what mortals shew,
And piety like that which seraphs know ;
A nobler fortitude than heroes reach,
And virtue greater than the sages teach ;
While every speaking feature seems to shine
With peace serene, and purity divine.”

Lady G—— with much emotion pressed the cold hand which Mrs. Seymour extended. Poor Alice, subdued by the sight, wept bitterly. “Alice, my love,” said her mother, “you promised to leave me alone with Lady G——. Go and take a short walk, it will revive you ; and I hope you will return in better spirits.”

Alice withdrew ; but possessed as she was of a heart full of devoted love to her dear mother, we cannot expect anything from her but sorrow. She had only just

learnt to feel that her mother must die ! Her hopes, one by one, had fallen to the ground. Her mother dead ! and there appeared an end of every thing. But not one selfish feeling mingled with her sorrow. Of herself she never thought ; or looked beyond that point. Every thing afterwards was a blank—a void ; and in the violence of youthful and inexperienced feeling, she had no idea that even time could blunt the edge of such affliction.

Every one must feel for Alice, particularly when we reflect how various circumstances had conspired, from her first entrance into life, to attach her to her mother ; and yet, in the hour of deepest sorrow, it was to her a blissful solace to feel certain that no act of hers had added a pang to the sufferings of her parent ; and that she might truly say,—“ I thank God I have, on all occasions, not only acknowledged, but approved myself a dutiful daughter to my dear parent—

“ And may reproach transmit my name abhorr’d
To latest time, if ever thought was mine,
Unjust to filial reverence—filial love !”

Indeed most applicable to her conduct and feelings were the beautiful words of Ruth,—“ Whither thou goest, I will go ; and where thou lodgest, there will I lodge ; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God ! Where thou diest, there would I wish to die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me !”—Her religious feelings were strong, and she prayed for support under the affliction which she too plainly saw would soon overwhelm her. It was God alone who could indeed support and console her in the hour of trial which was at hand.

Mrs. Seymour conversed freely with Lady G——, whose interest in the mother of her young friend was strongly excited. She was indeed a being well calculated to awaken the best sympathies.

Even in the total wreck of health and strength, the outlines of great beauty were visible ; and there was a calmness and resignation in her deportment which gave a saint-like appearance to her countenance. No complaint escaped her lips : she was evidently ready and prepared to leave this world ; and her manners betokened only submission to the will of God, gentle endurance of the sufferings with which it had pleased him to afflict her, a calm prospect of the grave, and joyful expectations of a higher existence.

It was not until she began to speak of her daughter that anxiety became visible in her expressions ; then indeed did her fortitude give way, and human feelings for a time mastered all others.

She told Lady G—— that she had requested her presence to beseech her protection for her child ; that if she obtained it, she would then feel relieved of the only weight which appeared to impede her progress to another world, and

clouded her dying thoughts with all the anxieties and evils of this life. If Lady G—— would promise to allow Alice an asylum in her house, as the governess of Lady Emma, and that she would never lose sight of her, what a blessed assurance would that be to her sinking heart!

She then gave her Ladyship the history of Mr. Harcourt's unjustifiable and obdurate conduct towards her; and intimated the advantage she imagined her daughter might obtain by the interference of such friends as Lord G—— and herself in her behalf. Lady G—— promised every thing that was certain to speak comfort to the poor mother, and engaged to be a parent to her child.

“O let me hear again those words of comfort, and I shall die in peace!” exclaimed Mrs. Seymour, in joyful rapture. “O madam!” she continued, “my weak expressions can never tell what consolation your beneficent promises afford me; but, ‘blessed are the merciful, for they

shall obtain mercy !” and may this act of true humanity plead for you at the tribunal of heaven ! May it be the means of obtaining for you those maternal blessings which have been hitherto, for some wise purpose, withheld. May your children live to be your solace, and may you, and your excellent husband, be spared to witness their prosperity and virtue ! You have the widow’s prayers, the mother’s blessing ! My poor orphaned Alice will not disgrace your kindness !” she continued, with a mother’s pride shedding a momentary glow over her attenuated features.—“ If there is a being pure and faultless in this world, I may firmly say it is my fatherless girl. She has been tried in the ordeal of prosperity, and in that of adversity ; from both has she come forth untainted ; and what comfort is it to a dying mother to feel as I do, secure in the unshrinking, the tried virtue of her child !”

Mrs. Seymour was exhausted by the

violence of her feelings, and sunk back upon her couch. Sarah's assistance was obliged to be called, who, at Lady G——'s instigation, administered a restorative to her beloved mistress. When she was a little revived, (with that care for the welfare of others which had ever marked her character, and assured by the benevolence of Lady G——,) she ventured to recommend to her goodness poor Sarah; telling how she had followed their shattered fortunes to do her utmost for them, and who merited a better fate than to be thrown upon the wide world without a friend!

"Your Ladyship," concluded Mrs. Seymour, again becoming faint; "perhaps when I am gone, will kindly see that she is sent back to the home which she left for our sakes, and has indeed been a comfort to us."

"Not from Miss Alice, madam—you will not send me from her!" cried poor Sarah, the tears standing in her eyes.

“ If so great a misery should befall us as to be deprived of you, my beloved mistress, could I live, and be separated from your daughter ?”—Then falling on her knees before Lady G——, in an agony of sorrow, she exclaimed, “ Let me remain in your Ladyship’s house, in the humblest capacity, as the meanest drudge. I will do any thing, only let me have the comfort of being beneath the same roof with Miss Seymour, of daily seeing my adored benefactress.”

Lady G—— assured her that she should not be separated from her young mistress, and having consoled her, and acted truly the part of “ the good Samaritan,” pouring oil into wounds which only her kindness could have healed, she returned home, in sorrow certainly, and yet with the delightful conviction of having done good. The satisfied feelings which pervaded her benign heart are well expressed, by the first lines of the following beautiful apostrophe of Shakspeare :

“ The quality of mercy is not strained ;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice bless'd,
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes—
'Tis mightiest to the mightiest ; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown,
His sceptre shews the force of temp'ral power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Whereon doth sit the dread and fear of kings ;
But mercy is above the scepter'd sway.
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings ;
It is an attribute of God himself ;
And earthly power doth then shew likest God's,
When mercy seasons justice !”

Lord G——, on learning what his kind lady had done, much approved her benevolent intentions, and promised to assist in all that she had engaged to the afflicted mother ; while Lady Emma blessed her kind parents' goodness and, though she wept for her friend's unhappiness, still a gleam of pleasure mingled with her feelings, in knowing that it would be her sweet task to sooth the orphan's sorrows, and wipe the tear of anguish from her eye.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHERE was Alice all this time ?

According to her mother's desire she went out ; and with eyes red with weeping, and a sinking heart, walked to the beach, where, sitting down upon a rock, she abandoned herself to the wretched thoughts which crowded upon her imagination, and gave unrestrained vent to her grief. Loud sobs burst from her overcharged bosom, as, leaning her head upon her hand, she thought of the scene she had quitted ; but she sought not to repress her grief, for she had flown to the most sequestered part of the shore, and believed these tokens of the affliction which overpowered her were unobserved by any one.

“My mother!” she exclaimed, “am I really to lose you? Shall I live to see those dear eyes closed in death? Am I to be left in this dreary world without the cheering aid of your presence? What is to become of me? How is your poor child to exist without you?”

She wept convulsively, and little did she heed the approach of another person. Presently she felt her arm gently touched; she started and looked round, and beheld the “old gentleman,” who was regarding her with the most tender compassion.

“What ails you, my poor child?” said he, in the kindest manner, so totally different from his usually rough mood, that Alice, whose heart was open to receive sympathy, hailed his presence as that of a friend. All that she could say was—“O, Sir!—my mother!—my dear mother!”

“Well! and what of her?” he inquired with abruptness; and yet an ex-

pression of anxiety was visible on his countenance.

“ She cannot live many days, and I, her miserable child, in health and strength, with a long life of misery before me, to drag on without her ! If it had pleased the Almighty to have given me the hope of soon rejoining her, then could I see her quit this world of trouble with joy, for she is fitted to inhabit a much more glorious sphere ; but in my wicked selfishness, fain would I keep her with me. O, Sir, you do not know what a mother I shall lose !”

Her companion did not answer ; but tears chased each other down his rough cheeks, and he trembled with agitation. After a silence of a few minutes, during which time both of them appeared to be absorbed in the most painful reflections, the gentleman said, in a voice evidently suffering from emotion, “ But why are you not with your mother ?—why leave her at such a time ?”

“ She desired me to leave her,” sobbed poor Alice, “ as she wished to have some private conversation with our kind friend Lady G——.”

“ And do you know what she is going to say to Lady G—— ?”

“ She did not tell me, but I partly guess what it is ;”—and here the tears of the afflicted girl burst forth in fresh torrents—“ she wishes—it is to request for me her protection when she is——is gone !”

“ But have you no friends—no relations to whom you can apply for assistance ?” inquired the old man.

“ None. I have an uncle, but he spurns us from him ; he thinks us worthless. He was the means of breaking my father’s heart ; and by the desertion of his sister, has added to her wretchedness, and by that means, doubtless, has expedited the calamity which is about to overwhelm her wretched child. Oh ! if he could know half my bitter grief, then he

would feel, perhaps, some remorse for his cruelty."

"He does know it; and on his knees he confesses his contrition—his remorse—and implores your pardon," cried the miserable man, throwing himself upon his knees before the astonished girl. "In me behold your uncle!—that infatuated, wilfully blinded being, whose name you have so much reason to execrate—who has been the author of so much evil! You may well shudder at my sight, and loathe my very appearance; but if repentance, however late, will touch your heart, you see in me a wretched, but a truly contrite man. To you I will make every reparation in my power."

"Your power to do it comes too late," said Alice, her person becoming erect, and her countenance assuming a sternness foreign to her nature; and having said these words, she walked hastily away, feeling relieved of an oppressive weight, when she found herself at her mother's

door, and out of the sight of her newly-acquired relative.

We must not blame her for appearing thus unforgiving. We must remember the present state of her feelings; and can we wonder that on so suddenly, and without the slightest preparation, meeting with the person who had been the means of disturbing so much happiness; that the image of her departed father—her expiring mother, should rise up in her distempered imagination, and shut out, for a short space of time, that feeling of forgiveness which reflection, and a proper sense of religion, would afterwards suggest as the true Christian line of conduct.

Alice found her mother in a tranquil sleep: her mind was comparatively calm, and the fatigue, occasioned by her interview with Lady G——, had produced a short slumber. This gave to Alice some minutes to collect her agitated spirits; and deciding that it would be better to mention nothing of the scene which had occurred,

unless she saw a renovation of strength in Mrs. Seymour, which would enable her to listen calmly to the recital, she prepared to meet with a more tranquillized demeanor the waking moment of her adored mother.

Mr. Harcourt had long felt the stings of remorse for his barbarous conduct towards his hapless sister and her daughter ; but the unbending stubbornness of his disposition determined him to persevere in the unfeeling course which he had commenced.

However, conscience is a monitor which will allow of no peace. Restless and uneasy, he was forced to confess to himself his excessive wickedness, in thus visiting the faults of the husband on the unoffending wife.

Even before they had quitted Elm Grove, he would have given much to have been able to conquer his stubborn

heart, and to have held out a hand of comfort to them ; but he could not. Long indulged habits of selfishness were not easily to be subdued.

Though he saw his niece several times, and could not help instantly acknowledging the influence of her goodness, still, rather than compromise his character for inflexibility, he allowed her to depart with her mother in poverty and sorrow.

He imagined that when they were gone the impression would wear off ; but it was in vain that he endeavoured to forget them ; they were ever present to his imagination, and a voice appeared constantly to whisper in his ear, “ Where is your ruined, widowed sister, and her innocent child ? ”

His immense wealth gave him no enjoyment ; every luxury which it afforded appeared to upbraid him, and to remind him of those who were pining in abject penury.

In this restless state of mind he at last

resolved to go to W—— ; and, although unacknowledged to himself, it was with the intention of seeking ultimately a reconciliation with his sister. But from day to day his evil genius prompted him to defer this act of justice ; and although his niece's perfections became each time that he saw or heard of her, still more the object of his warmest admiration, and he longed to claim the gratification of calling her his niece, still the consciousness of having acted culpably, and the natural reserve of his disposition, withheld him. Had not his feelings been all called forth by the afflicting sight of poor Alice's sorrow, there is no saying when they might have been disclosed ; but once confessed, a load seemed to have been lifted from his mind, and the sparks of latent good, which had hitherto rested dormant in his nature, were now completely roused. Perhaps my readers may have guessed, that the beautiful fruit, which was never omitted being sent to Mrs. Seymour, and the

happiness with which Alice found herself once more in possession of her own musical instruments, were benefits which the awakened affections of Mr. Harcourt urged him to bestow. At that time he had not dared to hazard more, though he would willingly have given half his fortune for the past to be forgotten, and his sister and niece to participate with him in the advantages afforded by the remainder.

The reception which Alice gave him, instead of damping his ardour, only strengthened his feelings in her favour: it convinced him of her noble disinterestedness—her total disregard of situation. She did not suppress her natural sentiment of indignation from the anticipation of what her candour might rob her, though she knew his fortune was almost beyond calculation, and that she was his rightful heiress; that in one moment he could raise her from indigence to the highest station which wealth could purchase.

Alas! the gifts of fortune were only prized by Alice as instrumental to her mother's comfort. For herself she had yet to learn to think.

Mr. Harcourt hovered round the house in which his sister lived for some days, in the hope of again seeing Alice, but was disappointed.

Mrs. Seymour was very ill, and her daughter never for a moment quitted her. She did not speak of her meeting with Mr. Harcourt, but still persisted in her intention of being silent on the subject; for her mother's mind appeared so calm and happy since her interview with Lady G——, that Alice could not bear to interfere with her tranquillity by entering upon so agitating a topic; and she profoundly dreaded any event, which she imagined might expedite the fatal and fast-coming moment.

However, Mr. Harcourt's impatience knew no bounds to make his peace with his sister before she died; and by what he

heard from those around, he feared every day might prove her last.

One morning as Alice was sitting by her mother's bedside, the following letter was delivered to her :

“ Do not reject this letter, as you most justly, most naturally despised my overtures of reconciliation. Pause, Alice, before you destroy it, and do not spurn from you an uncle, who is most truly anxious to endeavour, by affection and devotion, to make amends for his past cruelty and injustice. To you I appeal for mercy. Forgive me if you can ; and O, I entreat you, endeavour to make my peace with your mother. Tell her that on my knees I supplicate her pity ; but her piety—her goodness will plead for me. Forgiveness is an attribute of heaven, and she who will be the inhabitant of that blissful region will, I know, bestow it upon me. Tell her, that to my care, not to that of strangers, must she

confide her treasure. I will be her stay—her support—may I say her father?—No!—that sacred name brings recollections to my mind which overwhelms me with shame and remorse. But to you, Alice, who are the model of every virtue, I confide my cause; and exist but in the trembling hope of being called into your presence to taste that solace which I am aware I little deserve—that of being forgiven by your injured mother, and received by you as your affectionate uncle.

“J. HARCOURT.”

Alice was now obliged to reveal the whole of the circumstances to her mother, who had been watching her countenance, whilst she perused the letter.

The disclosure had no other effect upon Mrs. Seymour than that of satisfaction. She desired Alice immediately to send for her brother. “My Alice will receive him with kindness, I hope,” added she, as she read a shadow of repugnance on

her expressive countenance. "When I reflect," she continued, "upon my own great need of forgiveness, the rich and abundant mercy of the Almighty towards me, and upon the sublime and affecting example of our Lord, I feel no wish to harbour resentment against a being with whom I hope one day to worship before the throne of God: and let us remember, my child, that those who foster such passions will for ever be excluded from his divine presence. Pride and discord, hatred and revenge, are banished from thence. It is Christ himself who declares the solemn truth. My Alice, those who have sincerely mourned over their own infirmities, will be disposed meekly to bear with the frailties of others. It is vain to plead that the duty is difficult; it is a commanded duty, and therefore only difficult to the heart which is not properly disposed. One moment's reflection upon the words of our Saviour, and all animosity ought to vanish from our

minds : ‘ Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him, until seven times ? I say unto thee, not until seven times, but until seventy times seven !’ His reply to this question is as energetic as it is clear and decisive.”

Alice was reproved ; she saw her error, and was willing immediately to make amends for it.

She wrote without any further delay the following words :

“ I have communicated the contents of your letter to my mother ; and she desires I will say that she accepts your offer of reconciliation with joy, and is anxious to assure you of her forgiveness. My dearest mother has convinced me, by her sweet example, that my conduct to you the other day was faulty in the extreme. Forgive my unkindness ; attribute it to surprise, and to the impulse of a heart embittered by the anguish of filial sorrow. Believe me when I tell you, that

every unworthy feeling has been rooted from my heart, and that in future you may command my deference and affection.

“ALICE SEYMOUR.”

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. HARCOURT lost no time in obeying the summons of Mrs. Seymour; and affecting indeed was the interview between the brother and sister.

Much had she to forgive; but Mr. Harcourt was completely humbled, and a sincere penitent. When he looked at the dying form of his poor sister, and listened to the angelic sweetness of her voice, which instead of reproaches breathed the kindest expressions, and endeavours to sooth the grief he now evinced, he felt the sharp stings of conscience, and thought that years of contrition would be necessary to wipe out the stain

of his guilt. On his knees he promised to be more than a father to her child ; that she should be his only object in this world ; that she should be made as happy as fortune and kindness could render her.

“For riches she shall never want,” said he, “and I will watch over her as a jewel beyond price ; and when I die, I shall take care to leave her under the protection of those who will as anxiously take charge of her. In short, my sister, have not a care for your Alice. I feel that the only means left me for making my peace with God and with myself, is to do my duty towards your child. May my future conduct plead for me, and obtain for my faulty heart that forgiveness which I know I scarcely can expect to obtain.”

Mrs. Seymour received these promises with joy. Her only earthly care was removed ; and with tranquil hope, she cast all her thoughts upon that God, before whom she humbly expected soon to ap-

pear ; and waited with patient resignation for that moment when it should please the Almighty to end her sufferings, and take her to himself.

Every comfort and luxury now poured in upon Mrs. Seymour and her daughter ; and Mr. Harcourt's only care seemed to be the study of ameliorations for his sister's sufferings, and composing the afflicted state of poor Alice's spirits, by words of sympathy and consolation. He was anxious they should be removed to a more commodious lodging ; but Dr. Wilmot told him it would be risking too much for Mrs. Seymour, and even shorten the few days that were yet spared to her. Indeed, she became perceptibly weaker, and was now not able to leave her bed.

Alice of course never left her ; and she watched by her side with that intensity of anxiety, known only to those who have witnessed the last moments of their dearest tie on earth.

Mr. Harcourt behaved liberally to Mr. Turner ; and although he said he never could replace his talented assistant, yet the magnificent present which he received amply remunerated him for any temporary inconvenience.

Lady G—— and her family were rejoiced at the improved prospects of their dear young friend, although they fully participated in her present grief and mournful anticipations. With most considerate kindness, they were unremitting in their attentions to the invalid ; and affectionately endeavoured by all in their power to sooth the bitter sorrow of our heroine.

Poor child ! she vainly strove to subdue it : particularly in the presence of her mother was she anxious to appear composed ; and fervently did she pray for resignation to support herself with fortitude under the coming blow.

In the hour of deep affliction we are

too much disposed to yield to grief, instead of looking to Heaven ; and considering with humility, that the wise providence of God disposes of all worldly events ; and although He may not satisfy our short-sighted desires, yet He never fails to order what is best for us. Often does the grave become the shelter from some impending evil. In our afflictions, therefore, let us, like Alice, seek comfort from the true source. The source of mercy is heaven ; and from thence all consolations are derived. Sorrows, if submitted to as dispensations of God, have a blessedness connected with them ; for as our trust grows firm and stedfast, our peace here will increase, and in the next world we may anticipate the full reward of our faith.

It was at the close of a miserable day, passed in the chamber of sickness, that Alice sat contemplating the wasted form, the pale and altered countenance of her

beloved mother, who, after many hours of intense suffering, had fallen into a tranquil sleep.

If religion had not impressed on her the sacred feelings of piety and submission, how impossible would it have been for her to have endured the afflicting sight of her adored and dying mother!

Mr. Harcourt at that moment gently entered the room, seeing by the countenance of Alice that Mrs. Seymour was asleep. He sat down by his niece, took her hand within his, and looked upon her agonized face with sympathising pity.

Suddenly Mrs. Seymour awoke. She looked at her daughter and her brother with a calm smile of pleasure. "My brother," she faintly said, "let me see our Alice in your arms."

Alice threw herself weeping upon the bosom of her uncle, who, much affected, pressed her to his heart.

"Now, my darling child, come near me," continued the patient sufferer; "let

me look at you once more, for my sight grows dim. My precious girl! I have not long to remain with you; let my last strength be employed in a few parting words to my own Alice.—My child!” she exclaimed, a beam of joy brightening her eyes, “as long as you live, you will at least have one cheering reflection—that of having been an exemplary daughter. Your mother with her dying breath thanks you for all your unremitting care—your devoted affection to her. You have soothed my affliction, laboured for my comfort, and softened my dying pains—I leave this world blessing you—and oh, my child! continue your virtuous course. Let the remembrance of these, my last words, keep you in the path of goodness, and lead you at last to that kingdom, where, in all humility, I hope to meet you. Look forward to that reunion; and may you, my beloved Alice, in the strength of that hope, advance through the journey of life which is before

you : may you ever raise your expectations towards that home, which will be prepared for every true Christian— to that home, where nothing dwells but innocence and holy love ; where all the good we have lost is there to be found ; where the justice of God will be known to be mercy ; and where sin and sorrow will be remembered no more. God in heaven bless you, my child ! Let me look at you—let me kiss you once more !”

Alice, speechless and tearless from intense emotion, kissed the loved countenance of her mother, which was damp with the dew of death. Mrs. Seymour smiled serenely, and then motioned for Sarah to approach her. The weeping girl obeyed.

“Watch over my child,” she said, “and never leave her. You have been a good girl : you have well performed your duties—my blessing attends you. Now arrange my pillows, and leave me : I must commit my thoughts to God.”

Her lips moved for some moments, as if in fervent prayer. Suddenly she raised herself up in bed, with a strength she had not for weeks evinced, and fixing her eyes upon her daughter, who was resting almost fainting in her uncle's arms, she exclaimed, "My good Alice!" and then fell back, and, without a struggle, her gentle spirit winged its flight to the realms of bliss.

Thus died this excellent woman. To her, death was no new subject—salvation no untried theme—the grave no strange country—heaven not an unlooked-for home. She had waited for the angel of the covenant who had redeemed her; "even the angel of Jehovah"—the Lord Jesus Christ—to send his messenger to summon her into the eternal presence; and the language of her heart had long been this—"I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!"

Human nature cannot behold, without intense affliction, the dying hour of

one dear to our hearts; but how much are the pangs of regret alleviated by the knowledge that the sure, but humble hope of everlasting life, has cheered the last moment of the departing Christian!

[illegible]

81. *maestri* (master)
 82. *noialtre* (other)
 83. *signore* (lord)
 84. *chiodi* (nails)

Figure 1: A diagram illustrating the structure of the \mathcal{H}_∞ control problem. The system is represented by a block diagram with inputs w and u , and outputs y and z . The system is partitioned into two parts: a top part (containing blocks G_{11} , G_{12} , G_{21} , and G_{22}) and a bottom part (containing blocks H_{11} , H_{12} , H_{21} , and H_{22}). The inputs w and u are fed into the top part, and the outputs y and z are fed into the bottom part. The top part is labeled \mathcal{H}_∞ and the bottom part is labeled \mathcal{H}_2 .

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CHAPTER XV.

OUR poor Alice ! how shall I describe her heart-rending sorrow, or that acute anguish of mind, which overwhelmed her after the first stupefaction of grief. Her case was not a common one.

Her mother had been so much to her, such an exciting motive for exertion—had called forth so many energies—was so dearly beloved—that, deprived of her, we cannot wonder at her sinking for a time into a state of extreme depression.

Fatigue of body, as well as mental suffering, quite subdued her ; and although, with a degree of calmness which almost alarmed those around her, she

supported herself until the dreadful morning arrived, which deprived her of all that remained of her adored parent—when all was over, no one motive left for exertion—when she no longer beheld those dear features which, even marbled by death, she still gazed upon with doating affection—then, indeed, did her strength fail her, and she was carried to the house of her kind friend Lady G—in a state afflicting to all beholders.

A nervous fever was the consequence of all that she had undergone; and for some time it was apprehended that the re-union of the mother and child was not far distant.

How acute during this interval were the feelings of Mr. Harcourt. Two victims to his infatuated conduct had already fallen. Was another to follow—the beautiful, the excellent being whom he had only lately learnt to prize? Was he to lose her, who he intended should be his atonement for all his folly—her upon

whom he intended to lavish all that treasure which had been his stumbling-block?

For almost the first time in his life, he fled for refuge to the only true source of comfort.

He humbled himself before his God; and from that time he could date his first acquaintance with his Maker—from that hour, I rejoice to say, he daily improved in every Christian virtue; and before he left this world, became a sincere and pious disciple of that Saviour, who came into this world to call sinners to repentance.

Long and severely did Alice suffer; and only by slow degrees did she evince symptoms of recovery. But it was not ordained that she should die. She was spared to be an ornament to society, to throw fresh lustre on the name of Christian.

Lady G——, who most zealously took the place of a mother towards her, endeavoured to comfort her in every way;

but found no means so effectual as recalling to her mind the perfections of Mrs. Seymour, her angelic resignation under all the afflictions which she endured, and her complete reliance upon the justice and mercy of God.

She reminded her how often her mother had implored her to moderate her grief for her loss. "And, my dear Alice," repeated this excellent woman, "if it is permitted to the blessed dead to look upon those whom they have left in this world, would it not prove to her your obedience to her will, your dutiful affection to her memory, if she saw you struggling to obtain that composure, for which you ought to pray unceasingly. Would you selfishly wish to recall your mother back to this world of suffering, when you have every reason to suppose her blessed in heaven? Why do you weep so bitterly? You have certainly lost your excellent mother; but she whose happiness was your only aim, for whom you would have sacrificed

every thing, is now reaping the rich reward promised to the virtuous on earth, quitting a world of, at best, but uncertain pleasures, for the enjoyment of unfailing bliss. Your study now, my love, ought to be to endeavour, by the exercise of every duty, to fit yourself for the happiness of meeting her in heaven."

Alice was ever open to conviction; she combated with her sorrow, and meekly endeavoured to resign herself without a murmur to the will and dispensations of Providence.

Mr. Harcourt, on his return to W—— after a month's absence, on account of the new disposition he wished to make of his property and other affairs, was deeply distressed on observing the change caused by grief in the appearance of Alice. In order to amuse her mind, and having been also recommended to try the effects of change for the restoration of her health, he proposed the plan of making a tour upon the continent, and induced

Lord and Lady G—— to be of the party, urging that it might likewise prove most beneficial to Lady Emma.

A few months was originally intended to be the limit of their absence from England ; but Mr. Harcourt finding that the novelty of the life appeared to awaken an interest in the hitherto apathetic mind of Alice, and in a measure abstract her thoughts from the melancholy ideas which clouded them, determined to pass the winter in Italy.

The protracted stay of Alice in what is emphatically called “ the land of song,” perfected her [most materially in those accomplishments for which she had evinced such decided talent ; and while her musical powers plainly evinced the utmost genius and science, her industry enabled her to cultivate with success those other branches of education, for which her residence in Italy afforded such facility. Yet it required the lapse of some time,

before she could resume her old habits of study and application.

For many months after the death of Mrs. Seymour, she felt so great a disinclination and repugnance to the idea and sound of music, that Mr. Harcourt feared she would never be susceptible of her former taste for it.

Lady G—— entreated that she might not be urged upon the subject, advising her uncle to leave the result to time.

Lady Emma continued to pursue her musical education, which was a means of amusing many of those hours her delicate health obliged her to remain within doors; and delighted that she should find this resource, Lady G—— procured for her all the first masters which Rome could afford.

At first, poor Alice flew to her own apartment, and endeavoured to shut out the sound of strains which were agonizing to her afflicted heart.

Her earliest associations and dreams of lost joys were mingled with the ideas of music. It was for her parents' gratification that her young energies were first directed to attaining the perfection which afterwards crowned her efforts.

It was her father's balm and solace, after the vexations and labours of his profession : and what was it not to her mother !

Had it not been the means of supporting her in comfort, in her declining state ; obtaining for her the necessaries of life ; and at last, by its sweet influence, soothing even her dying pains ?

Gradually the mind of Alice became less irritated by the once-loved sounds ; and her anxious friends observed with pleasure that she remained one day a short time in the room, during the period Lady Emma was receiving her lesson on the harp.

The following morning she was again perceived to listen to her friend with

some degree of interest, and looked over her music with attention.

At length one day, as if by a desperate effort gaining dominion over her feelings, she approached the harp. She was alone in the room, and imagined herself unobserved ; but Lady G——, who was writing in an adjoining apartment, saw through a half-closed door every movement of her dear young friend.

Her countenance plainly evinced how painful was this violence to her feelings, and the extent of the effort she was making ; however, she seated herself, and drawing the instrument towards her, sang in a low and tremulous voice, the hymn her mother loved so dearly.

As the last notes died on her lips, convulsive sobs burst from her bosom ; and she seemed to lean for support against the harp. At length, suddenly rising she quitted the room, and many hours elapsed before she again joined the family circle. However, from that day she resolutely

devoted a short time to each instrument.

To those around it was evident how great was the struggle with her feelings ; but Alice was neither selfish nor perverse. She was well aware how much her uncle prized her accomplishments, and, above all, she felt that she should be doing what her parents would condemn, did she not continue to cultivate talents upon which so much time and trouble had been expended. She had piously determined to make their wishes a rule of conduct in after life ; and therefore firmly combated what she knew they would have deemed a culpable weakness.

As soon as Mr. Harcourt found that Alice again took an interest in the long-neglected science, he proposed her engaging such masters as she might consider advantageous. His offer was gratefully accepted ; and in the increase of occupation, she found a cheering solace for a wounded spirit.

Her friend Lady Emma became again the object of her tenderest attention; and the pains which she took to forward her education, which from her delicate health had been in a degree neglected, became her dearest occupation. She could never feel that she was doing sufficient for Lady G——, or properly shewing her affectionate gratitude for her kindness during her unfriended situation. One act she felt could never be repaid; and which called forth every ardent feeling of her nature: that was the recollection of the benevolence with which she had afforded consolation to her mother's breaking heart.

CHAPTER XVI.

EARLY in the spring, business obliged Mr. Harcourt to commence his journey homewards.

He would have left Alice with her friends the G—— family, still to inhabit and explore the beauties of Italy; but she felt he had claims upon her, and was anxious to accompany him to England.

Besides the consciousness that her presence was actually essential to his happiness, the excessive kindness of her uncle had completely won her warm and affectionate heart. He seemed, too, the only tie left of her adored mother; and she now clung to him with all the duty of a child.

All traces of moroseness and selfishness had fled from Mr. Harcourt's character. Though late, he sincerely wished to reform his errors of temper, and his success showed how earnest had been his efforts. From the remorse which at times preyed upon his spirits, he alone found relief in overwhelming his niece with acts of kindness ; and by watching her very countenance, he was enabled to anticipate her every wish.

Fearing to interrupt the happiness which again seemed dawning in the heart of Alice, he proposed her remaining in Italy, unmindful of the loss her society would be to him ; but amply was he repaid for his kind disinterestedness by hearing her firmly refuse to separate from him.

However, it was with excessive grief that Alice parted from her beloved friends, who were not to return to England until the ensuing year ; as another winter was recommended as likely to be conducive

to the complete restoration of Lady Emma's health.

This amiable family particularly regretted the departure of Alice, as they were pleasing themselves with the prospect of introducing her to Lord V—— their son, who had just left college, and was about to join his family in Italy. This was also a subject of regret to Alice; for she had heard so much in praise of this young nobleman, Lady Emma never being weary of talking of his perfections.

At the first commencement of spring, Mr. Harcourt and Alice quitted Italy, and, as it proved, the season was not far enough advanced for their journey; the passage of the Simplon being at once difficult and perilous from the snow which still covered the road.

On their arrival in Switzerland, Mr. Harcourt was taken seriously ill, the consequence of cold brought on by travelling

in so inclement a season, and they were detained some time at Geneva.

Many English families resident there offered every civility and attention to Alice and her uncle, who, however, could not be prevailed upon to leave the invalid ; notwithstanding among those who had so kindly sought her acquaintance, was a family the intimate friends of Lord and Lady G——, and whose society, like theirs, was distinguished by refinement and kindness.

At length the convalescence of Mr. Harcourt was decided ; and though she still hesitated leaving him, Alice was finally prevailed on to give her new friends some portion of her time.

One beautiful morning a note came from them to request she would joint their party in an excursion on the lake. Though the plan seemed to offer her every pleasure, she at first decided she would not go, from a fear it might detain her longer

than she should wish from her uncle ; however, he himself urged her compliance with the invitation, and she prepared to accompany the gay party of young people, who were to call for her on their way to the lake.

On reaching the shore they found the boat waiting in which they were to embark. The weather still seemed fine and propitious, although the boatmen looked as if they were not altogether satisfied with it ; however the youthful assemblage were not disposed to forego their amusement, and they all embarked in high spirits.

For some time every thing went on most prosperously. The attention of Alice was absorbed in the contemplation of the magnificent splendour of the surrounding scenery. So entirely were her thoughts engrossed and abstracted by the sublime beauty of the spectacle, that she did not observe any of her companions ; and with eyes fixed on the stupendous

mountains of Savoy, engaged in remarking the peculiar effect of the clouds which hung amidst them, she was perfectly unconscious that to one of the party she had long been an object of deep and scrutinizing attention.

They had nearly reached the spot where it was proposed they should disembark to dine, when the tempest, which was gathering on the mountains, began to agitate the waters.

At first the lightning, flashing in white fantastic streaks, and the succeeding thunder, echoing amidst the rocks and tremendous precipices of the Alps, were objects of pleasing though awful admiration to our heroine, and the rest of the party; they were also indulging themselves with the hope that the storm was passing away, when a burst of wind struck on the lake, and threw the foaming waves into the labouring bark.

It was too late to think of returning, for the wind, which set immediately across

the lake, would have rendered retreat as difficult as going forward, their progress in both instances being materially impeded by its violence.

The mirth of the party was now changed to horror. Fainting, shrieks, and tears, succeeded smiles and happiness.

It was in this awful moment that Alice evinced that strength of mind, the offspring of a well-regulated and religious education. Pale indeed she sat, but motionless, and not a word or sound escaped her.

Instead of tormenting the boatmen and all around with useless questions, she endeavoured by her fortitude to reassure the trembling girls, and to teach them that by thus giving way to their terrors, they not only increased them, but added to the distress of the moment. At last, finding that her efforts were unavailing, and that the danger was indeed becoming more alarming, she covered her eyes with her

hand, and committing herself to the care of Providence, prayed silently for that support which she had found under every dispensation.

The storm increased every moment, and the exhausted boatmen vainly attempted to gain the nearest point of land, their ineffectual efforts conspiring still more to discourage them. Their progress at length was so slow in the struggle with the waves and blasts of wind which threatened each minute to upset the boat, that they apprehended night would overtake them before they could reach the shore ; and every gentleman in the boat becoming sensible of the danger, seized the oars, and by turns relieved each other.

It was now for the first time that the eyes of Alice rested with more than a cursory glance on the countenance of a young man who sat a short distance from her. Her attention was attracted towards him by the vigorous and manly strength

with which he laboured for their safety, cheering by his words those whose feebler powers caused them to relax in their efforts; but when she had observed him for a few minutes, there was something in his appearance which interested her every feeling; at the same time that she had the vague idea of having before seen him. However, he at last spoke, and the tone of his voice instantly brought to her mind that of her dear Lady Emma. Was it possible! Could it be her brother?—She again looked at him. Yes, it must be him. She recognized the same dark eye; the contour of the face so exactly resembling that of her friend, while the strongest family likeness was strikingly perceptible.

Then did her amiable nature receive the most painful pang. Her excellent friends, were they again fated to lose a child, and in so sudden and appalling a manner! One too, who, from his appearance and countenance, seemed to have so

just a claim to their pride and affection. She redoubled her supplications to the throne of mercy; and the Almighty stretched forth his saving hand for the protection of these amiable beings.

After much danger and great labour on the part of the rowers, they at length reached the shore, where, partly sheltered from the tempest, which continued to rage with unabated fury, they landed; and after some difficulty were able to obtain accommodation for the night.

The ladies were immediately put into such beds as they could procure, drenched with wet, and half fainting from fatigue and alarm.

Very little rest, however, could Alice obtain. Distress at the idea of the anxiety which her uncle would sustain, filled her mind with wretchedness.

With the earliest break of morn, she was up and dressed; and stealing with caution from the apartment of her sleeping

companions, she went to the edge of the lake.

The tempest had already abated, and the waters, calm and still, reflected from their tranquil bosom the gorgeous colours of the rising sun, while all nature seemed exhausted, and reposing after the tumult of the last day.

To wait for the rest of the party Alice felt would be impossible. Her poor uncle ! his suspense must be so dreadful.

She looked around in the hope of seeing some small boat which she might bribe into her service. Fortunately she saw one approach the spot where she stood, guided by a single man. She called to him, offering terms which he joyfully accepted ; and she had just written a few lines with a pencil, informing the party of her departure, which she entrusted to a little boy who stood near, and was on the point of stepping into the boat, when she saw the young man who had attracted her attention the preceding evening, coming hastily towards her.

“ Miss Seymour !” he exclaimed, “ you are surely not going alone ; you must allow me to accompany you. I feel privileged to make this request,” he added, gracefully bowing, “ as the brother of your friend, Lady Emma : you will not deny me the happiness of being useful to one whom my sister dearly loves.”

Alice, with the utmost pleasure and confidence, held out her hand to Lord V——, and thus commenced her friendship with this truly amiable young nobleman—a friendship to end only with her life.

Embarking together in the little boat which Alice had engaged, they lost no time in speeding their way towards Geneva ; our heroine more than ever anxious to rejoin her uncle, from the circumstance of their meeting several boats despatched in search of her, which betrayed the alarm and inquietude he had experienced on her account.

His Alice, however, was soon restored to his arms in safety ; and, with tears of

joy and prayers of thanksgiving, he pressed his beautiful niece warmly to his heart.

His greeting with Lord V—— was cordial and affectionate in the extreme. A few words from Alice had taught him how to value the son of her benefactress ; and at Mr. Harcourt's earnest request he remained their guest until the period of their recommencing their route to England.

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. HARCOURT had purchased a fine estate in Somersetshire, with a princely mansion belonging to it, where he intended in future to reside. This property he settled, with all his funded possessions, on his niece, and thus rendered her as rich in worldly goods, as she was in intellectual endowments.

Mr. Harcourt was most impatient to introduce his heiress to her new home, and therefore expedited the business which required his presence in London.

It was at the close of a lovely evening in July, that they arrived at Woodlands; the village bells ringing a merry peal as they drove through the picturesque ham-

let, which was clustered round the simple and interesting-looking church.

When they reached the handsome gates which opened into the park, the attention of Alice, now completely aroused, was attracted by the appearance of the aged pair, who stood with delighted looks, bowing and courtseying to them as they passed.

In a moment she recognized two old pensioners of her father's, who had long performed the office of gate-keepers at Elm Grove.

Truly did she feel this gratifying attention of her kind uncle; and how gratefully did her speaking countenance look her thanks!

Her mind was now completely engrossed by the burst of beauty which the scenery of the park presented to her view. Glades, lawns, gentle hills, retiring vales, wood and water sweetly blended and harmonized in the landscape; the eye every where finding novelty and interest.

The carriage at length drove up before the princely portal ; and Alice then felt a degree of emotion she could not controul.

She was now entering a home—an extensive and magnificent home. She knew that she had become a person of importance ; for her uncle's boundless and secure wealth, to which she was the acknowledged heiress, had already taught her the power and influence of riches. She saw plainly that it could prove an universal passport ; and that the “ rich Miss Seymour ” derived every importance from that little monosyllable attached to her name.

Every circumstance conspired to give her happiness ; but still the rising tear stood in her eyes, and it was with an effort that she checked it ; but she endeavoured to look happy and tranquil, for she saw the look of pleasure and exultation which beamed in her uncle's countenance when he handed her from the carriage, and welcomed her affectionately to Woodlands.

She felt it was ungrateful not to endeavour to participate in his feelings ; but memory appeared to be unusually busy at that moment, and recollections of a most painful nature seemed to hang a veil of mourning over this scene of beauty and gratification.

Blessings of every kind were showered upon her ; but where were those whose presence would have shed brightness over her feelings ? These thoughts would crowd upon her mind, even in this full tide of prosperity, and it was in vain she tried to smile.

The doors were widely opened, and with gratified pride in his demeanour, Mr. Harcourt led Alice through a superb portico into the hall. There she beheld a line of well-remembered faces—all her father's old domestics.

Here was her nurse, the first who stepped forward to receive her ; and Alice sobbing audibly, threw herself into her arms.

Every servant in turn received an affectionate reception ; and when she found herself alone with her uncle, most fervently did she thank him for this act of thoughtful kindness.

One old friend she missed ; but she did not trust herself to inquire for him just then. It was her old groom Thomas, and with the remembrance of him came that of her still-loved Selim.

Mr. Harcourt soon hurried her from the library to the dining-room, where their repast awaited them. By the time it was concluded, Mr. Harcourt imagining, from the heavy eyes of his niece, that she was fatigued, asked her if she would not now permit him to conduct her to her own apartment, to which she gladly consented.

He then said to her, “ My dear Alice, I fear you have yet to witness what will distress your feelings at the first view. Your apartments are fitted up with furniture from Elm Grove ; at first they may

bring to your mind distressing recollections ; but I thought when the impression had worn off, they would prove to you a source of gratification and consolation."

Mr. Harcourt then led the way to her apartments, and, at the door of her boudoir, kissed her affectionately, and withdrew.

Alice walked through the beautiful rooms, without casting a look on either side. She saw a door which opened into the bedchamber, where Sarah was standing with a light ; she immediately entered it with the intention of at once retiring to rest. She knew that she was not in a state of mind to meet with any further excitement ; and that she must fortify her mind against giving way to regrets which savoured too much of murmuring against the will of God.

On first beholding the interior of her bedroom she started ; so exactly did every arrangement recall to her memory her sleeping-room at Elm Grove.

Sarah saw the amazement of her young mistress, and said, "O Miss Seymour, how kind Mr. Harcourt is to every one! —he has not forgotten even me! I found my father, and brothers, and sisters, waiting to receive me. Your uncle has removed them to an extensive farm, close to the park, and they are going on most prosperously. Every servant too, that was at Elm Grove, he has either brought here, or provided for elsewhere."

Alice did not reply; her heart was too full, and the most enthusiastic gratitude towards her uncle pervaded all her feelings. She thanked God fervently for all his mercies, and prayed that she might be deservedly sensible of all the blessings with which she was surrounded.

With these pious aspirations, mingled with thoughts of her lamented parents, she laid her head upon her pillow.

Visions of former days came over her mind. By the pale light of the lamp, she saw the well-remembered decorations of

the room, and could scarcely believe that she was not at Elm Grove ; and that the past had indeed really occurred. Restless and feverish she lay for some time with her imagination painfully excited ; but at length sleep, that never-failing friend to the young and innocent, “ wrapped its mantle around her,” and she forgot her griefs in refreshing slumber.

The morning dawned, and as her eyes gradually opened upon the bright and cheerful gleam which the sun cast through her window, dreams of past days faded from her mind, and collecting her scattered thoughts, she remembered where she was.

As she turned in her bed and beheld all the objects around her—the India muslin curtains, lined with rose-coloured silk—the painted blinds—the flowers like those her own hands had planted—her beautiful drawings hung round the room—pictures of scenes which reminded her of the happiest moments of her life, the

image of her father came to her mind, from whom all these pleasures were originally derived, and that of the mother, whose tenderness had reared her in health and innocence.

After wiping away the tears which such thoughts never failed to produce, she started from her bed, and hastened to complete the duties of the toilette.

She then passed into the boudoir, where she found assembled all the favourite ornaments, which her father used to please himself in collecting for her gratification. Here also was her piano, her harp, and a guitar; and opposite to these instruments hung two pictures covered with green silk.

I will not dwell upon the particulars of this scene; it may be guessed whose were the portraits, and the effect which the sight of them produced on the sensitive Alice. We will leave her to the contemplation of these mournful, though delightful possessions, and return to her, when,

after some time spent in filial sorrow, she went to the window, and throwing up the sash, sought to revive her spirits by the mild summer air which rushed into the apartment.

It was one of the sweetest mornings in early summer; the trees and shrubs displayed the beautiful bright green, so illustrative of freshness and youth, and which the poet might describe, but whose delicate beauty would mock the efforts of the painter.

Her boudoir opened on to a verandah, which communicated by steps into a flower-garden, which Alice instantly saw was the counterpart of her own loved spot at home.

There stood her cottage—she could have thought it the very same; and there was the aviary adjoining it. The early flowers were in blossom, and upon every leaf and every bud, hung bright drops of dew, which sparkled like diamonds in the morning sunbeams.

There was a cheerfulness of aspect—a healthiness of feeling which imparted its influence to all around. Every thing spoke of health and of innocence ; and as Alice put aside the clustering clematis that hung over the window, she looked the fit inhabitant of the scene before her.

The birds in the aviary seemed to welcome her arrival with a loud chorus. Her eye rested upon flowers she most prized ; the lily of the valley, her own sweet emblem, and all her dearly-loved plants, seemed to be gathered around her.

Over the little sweet briar hedge, which divided the garden from the rest of the domain, were seen the towering oaks and elms, the rich chestnuts, and the vigorous sycamores of the park ; and beyond them were just perceptible the distant mountains, mingling with, and scarcely discernible from, the horizon in this early hour in the morning. The spire of a church rose amongst the trees, and appeared to be at no great distance, its

Gothic tower harmonizing beautifully with the landscape.

Alice gazed upon the scene with rapture ; she felt inspired by it : her heart thrilled, and she could have joined the birds in a song of thankfulness and morning praise.

She forgot all sorrow in the delights of the moment, and hastily descended into the garden, anxious to examine the beautiful flowers, and to explore the different parts of this lovely spot.

“ Kind uncle !” she exclaimed in a tone of gladness, “ you have considered me in every thing.”

After some moments passed in looking at the cottage, the aviary, and the garden, she opened a little gate which led into a small paddock, where she saw a pretty ornamented shed. She walked across it, unmindful of the dew which was upon the long grass ; for an opening in the trees disclosed so fine a landscape, that she leant over a paling, and was soon lost

in contemplation of the beauty of the scene.

She was startled from a reverie into which she had fallen, by the sound of something approaching behind her. She looked suddenly round, and saw a little black pony, which had advanced so near to her, that its head almost touched her shoulder. She retreated a few steps back ; but in a moment afterwards was seen by the groom, who hastily left the shed which had concealed him, to throw her arms round the neck of the little animal ; and with a voice scarcely articulate from emotion, exclaimed, “ My own Selim !—my darling Selim !—my father’s own gift !”

Selim appeared to be equally well pleased ; for he rubbed his head against her, and did not appear to be at all anxious to avoid her caresses.

The groom approached, and Alice lifting her eyes, was in an instant clasping the old man’s hands in affectionate greeting.

“ My faithful, good Thomas!—how glad I am to see you!—How well Selim looks!—what care you must have taken of him!”

“ Why, Miss,” said the gratified Thomas, “ I have not ceased looking after him. He has had more grooming, and more pains taken with him, than if he had been the most precious horse in England; and although there stands in the stable for you an Arabian, which cost hundreds of pounds, I have never had the heart to do half so much for him as I have done for this little shelty. Every time I looked at him, I thought of you, my dear young lady, and of those who are gone. But,” continued he, seeing that Alice was becoming affected, “ we have every reason now to be happy; and it is no use thinking of the past. We should be ungrateful not to feel contented with the blessings we now enjoy. My new master strives hard to make us all so. Now, Miss, will you allow me to show you your beautiful

new horse, and the good safe roadster, which your uncle, my master, has bought for me to ride behind you? O how I long to see you on your side-saddle once more! You remember, Miss Alice, that it was I who first put you upon it, and taught you to sit as well as you used to do. I hope you have not forgotten all my lessons."

Alice smiled at the garrulity of the delighted old man, and charmed him by promising to take a ride that day; and having given another caress to Selim, who followed them to the gate of the paddock, she went with Thomas, that she might gratify him by her praises of his other charge.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ALICE delighted her uncle by the air of cheerfulness with which she met him at the breakfast table.

She had that morning witnessed so many kind attentions to her comfort and gratification, that she felt that it would be selfishly ungrateful not to endeavour to enjoy and appreciate the good fortune with which she was favoured.

She remembered that she had now the power of leading a life of real usefulness, and the gifts of fortune would be precious to her in every sense of the word. Her active imagination was already forming schemes of extensive benevolence; and she knew that she should be amply assisted in them by her uncle.

When she first met him this day, she threw her arms round his neck with true filial affection; and with tears, which glistened through her lovely smiles, she thanked him over and over again for all that he had done for her.

She related to him all that she had seen; her happiness at the unexpected sight of her little pet Selim; and her unqualified admiration of the beauty of the place.

Her praises were most soothing to his feelings, and taking her hands within his own, he said with much expression, "My dearest Alice, you almost make me feel happy. If it were not for that gnawing sensation of remorse which clings to my heart, I think my latter days might really repay me for all the misery that the consciousness of the mispent, unsatisfactory years of my former life has occasioned me."

"Talk not of remorse, my dearest uncle," said Alice, much touched by the

apparent sorrow of Mr. Harcourt ; “ the Almighty is gracious, and although you may not have sought him formerly, as you ought to have done, still does He not himself assure us, ‘ that there is pardon for the penitent, and peace for the humbled sinner ? ’ You have sincerely deplored your past infirmities ; you have studied the word of God—does not every line speak joy, and hope, and consolation ? Forgive me, who am yet but a child, in thus speaking so confidently to you ; but my dear mother used always to teach me, that if in sincerity of heart we pleaded our weakness and infirmities, ‘ and cast all our cares on Him who careth for us, ’ He will bear with our sorrows and our human frailties ; and that a gracious and compassionate God will not withhold from us that salvation which his own Son has purchased for us. Let me not see you despond, my kind uncle ; but allow me, young as I am, to be instrumental in leading your mind to ob-

tain that consolation, which never fails those who truly seek it."

To Mr. Harcourt this conversation was most comforting. He knew the excellent and strong understanding of his niece; and recollected that she had derived her religious principles from a mother who was well calculated to instruct her.

There is a peculiar charm and beauty in early piety; and God has deigned to encourage it by a special promise: "I love them that love me, and those who seek me early shall find me."

Alice then told her uncle some of the plans she had formed for increasing the comforts of the poor in the neighbourhood; and he gladly promised to assist her in all her charitable schemes: delighted to find her active mind already interesting itself in this, her new home.

Mr. Harcourt, after a long silence, in which he had appeared to be engaged in such serious thought, that Alice forbore

to interrupt him, at length proposed a walk in the park. She acquiesced with readiness, and was preparing with cheerfulness to accompany him, anxious to explore still more the beauties of Woodlands, when the increased seriousness of his look checked the gaiety of her heart.

As they descended the steps of the portico, he placed her hand within his arm; at the same time, with a grave tone of voice, he said, "My dear child, I have to introduce you to a spot which I feel assured will afford satisfaction to your filial piety; and although the first view of it may sadden your heart, I know that I shall receive your thanks for what I have done."

He then led the way through the park, until they arrived at a sequestered spot, beyond which Alice beheld a thick grove. They advanced through an umbrageous path, into which the rays of the sun could scarcely penetrate, until they reached a gothic gate, which opened into the

further recesses of the grove. Mr. Harcourt unclosed it with a key he drew from his pocket, and refastening it with care, proceeded onwards, still preserving a grave silence.

After passing between a row of spreading trees for some paces, they at length reached an open space, which was ornamented by the choicest shrubs, and most beautiful flowers variegating the mossy turf; and in the midst of this secluded parterre, stood a white marble edifice in the form of a Grecian temple. Alice looked at her uncle in amazement, waiting an explanation of what appeared to her some awful mystery; when she saw him, on their reaching the beautiful edifice, uncover his head with devout respect, and stand pale and speechless.

“Alice,” at last he said, after subduing with a violent effort his emotion, “within that structure repose the remains of your venerated parents! With every possible degree of respect and care, by my orders

they have been removed, to this spot, which I had constructed to contain them; and I feel a mournful pleasure in knowing that they rest so near me. Here I shall come every day and humble myself before the throne of God; and here, near the ashes of my excellent relatives, I shall solace myself with the idea that their blessed spirits will intercede for me, and obtain for me the pardon of my sins. When I die, may I also be placed within this mausoleum; and may I by a life of contrition, make some amends for the evil I have done!"

"May we all meet again in heaven, my dearest uncle!" cried Alice, much affected; "and may I be allowed to render your days on earth peaceful and happy, following the precepts of my beloved mother for my rule of conduct! She taught me that true faith in the merits of our Redeemer, and a conscientious discharge of the duties of this life, will ensure us peace on earth, and eternal

happiness in heaven. Let us follow this rule, my uncle, and our hopes of happiness will be well founded.—How sacred is this spot,” continued Alice, after a long silence ; “ here I shall almost fancy myself again in the presence of my parents. These flowers my own hands shall cultivate—these shrubs must all be my care—blessed beyond measure in the endearing and sacred occupation ! How truly kind and considerate you have been to me, my good, indulgent uncle ! For this last, this most inestimable blessing, I could thank you even on my knees.”

CONCLUSION.

I MUST now, my dear children, draw my simple tale to a close.

By you I am sure it will be received with affection and interest; and to my other young readers, I trust its perusal will be productive of amusement, and, I should hope, instruction. It will, indeed, be no inconsiderable source of satisfaction to me, if I may imagine that its tendency will have the effect of doing good, of exciting dormant energies, of inducing those who possess talents to cultivate them, not merely as ornaments to adorn the possessor, but as sources of real utility to yourself and others. The dis-

tribution of talents is indeed unequal ; but let not the humble possessor of one talent repine, nor the richly-gifted glory. Though your acquirements and capacity may be limited, you may still find important duties to perform, and graces to cultivate.

May the example of my Alice teach you to tread the path of duty with humility ; and even should it be one of suffering, may you remember by whom it has been trodden, and whither it leads ! The path of duty, indeed, is not always a way of pleasantness, but it is ever found to be that of peace.

How really peaceful must have been the feelings of Alice, possessing, as she did, the delightful conviction of having conscientiously fulfilled the end of her virtuous existence ; of having discharged every obligation which nature and principle would suggest ; and acted up to the strictest line of filial duty !

I rejoice to say, that her future life

was guided by those precepts which were so early impressed upon her mind ; and, though not called into action by such trials and afflictions as were her lot in early youth, her conduct was ever marked by the strictest virtue, with the active performance of all the duties of life.

She married the son of her friend Lady G——, and in the exalted situation which her union with this excellent young nobleman placed her, she never forgot the lesson of humility and the spirit of charity which she derived from the instructions of her good mother ; strengthened and refined as it was by her knowledge and experience of adversity.

Surrounded by delightful children of her own, she called to mind all her mother's precepts and opinions, and instilled into their young minds the same principles with which her own had been cultivated.

Though the affliction with which the loss of her parents had overwhelmed her,

was softened and ameliorated by time to the latest period of her life, the remembrance of them was ever full of fervent and reverential affection, mingled with much sadness.

Seated on a rustic bench, in the little parterre adjoining the mausoleum, she used to instruct her blooming children in the sacred truths of revealed religion ; and she would often talk to them of her parents — of their goodness, her mother's piety, and the love she bestowed upon her child.

Alice was rewarded for her own filial affection, by the devoted love of her offspring ; and which they appeared to inherit from their excellent parents.

Mr. Harcourt lived many years to witness the happiness of his niece. The later years of his life were passed in the exercise of every duty, and he died at last regretted by Alice as a second father.

His remains were placed by the side of his sister and her husband ; and full of hope that he might inherit that happiness

which she humbly trusted was ensured to him, from his sincere repentance and true faith in the mercy of God, Alice shed tender, but not painful tears over his grave.

Having surrounded my interesting and virtuous heroine with every blessing, I am now about to take my leave of her. However, I must not forget one little addition ; which, trivial and misplaced as it may appear to some, will I know be a matter of great interest to others of my readers—my own dear Mary in particular, who is accused of fostering the weakness of an enthusiastic love of animals, among which her pony ranks as supreme.

Selim, the loved and pampered favorite, having become too old to be of any farther use to his mistress ; his diminutive form having also long lost him the distinction of being her charger, led a life of luxurious ease ; until the young heir of the G—— family, the eldest son of

our heroine, was old enough to be placed upon a pony. Then did old Thomas lead him with much parade from the paddock, and, with an air of delighted pride, lift the little boy upon the broad, fat back of the sagacious Selim, who appeared to bear his precious burden with careful pleasure.

Alice witnessed this scene with eyes glistening through tears, which started from recollections which, although mellowed by time, always brought a pang to her affectionate heart. She knew now how to appreciate the feelings of a parent; and she silently prayed to the Almighty to protect her darling, and to allow her to witness his prosperity and happiness.

Selim had the honour of being the nursery pony to all the little family in succession; and Thomas used to boast that he and Selim had taught his lady and all her children to be the best riders in England.

I must now, my dear children, say adieu ; at the same time breathing most earnest wishes for your welfare and happiness, and praying you to remember that, "To be good is to be happy."

Let me also warmly endeavour to impress upon your minds, that the morning of life is as transient as it is lovely. It passes away like a shadow, and is gone ; but it may leave rich memorials to tell that it has not been spent in vain. It is the season in which habits of usefulness may be firmly established ! when the understanding can be most successfully enriched ; and the benevolent affections of the heart most easily fostered.

Endeavour then to ascertain with precision, what are the personal and peculiar duties which belong to your age and situation.

Humbly implore the assistance of the Holy Spirit, that your understanding may be enlightened, your will rectified, and

your heart be inspired with its divine influence.

Do not pass over these parting lines as irrelevant to the story, and as dull and uninteresting; it is your mother, my children, who addresses you, with the fervent hope that these words may sink deep into your heart, and bring forth such effects as may lead you on in the paths of virtue and piety.

It may be your lot in life to meet with many troubles—many difficulties; but you may implicitly rely upon my assurance, that if your conduct is strictly regulated by the rules which our Saviour himself has laid down for your guide and assistance—if you seek his precepts from his own book—"keep Heaven in your eye" as your ultimate reward—and "use the world but not abuse it,"—you will receive consolation under every tribulation; you will be assisted by God himself—His arm will support you—His right hand will lead you!

He will be with you in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, in time and in eternity ; and when you have departed hence, you will be admitted into the kingdom and joy of your Lord.

And your parents. What will be their happiness—their solace, on seeing you daily and hourly improving in favour with God and man ! What balm it will be to their hearts, when sickness and age may have overtaken them, to be supported and consoled under their infirmities by the tender affection of their children.

And should it please the Almighty in his wisdom to remove your parents sooner from this world, than in the course of nature you might have expected, what a cheering reflection to feel assured, like Alice, that you have endeavoured, to the best of your ability, to do your duty to those beings who gave you life, who watched over your infant years with tenderness and anxiety, and whose dearest,

fondest wish on earth, was your well-doing.

Oh ! may you then, my dearest children, “go on and prosper !” May you, as Alice, serve God diligently without doubt, fear, or distrust ; and may you, like her, meet with reward in this world, and a well-grounded hope of bliss hereafter !

THE END.

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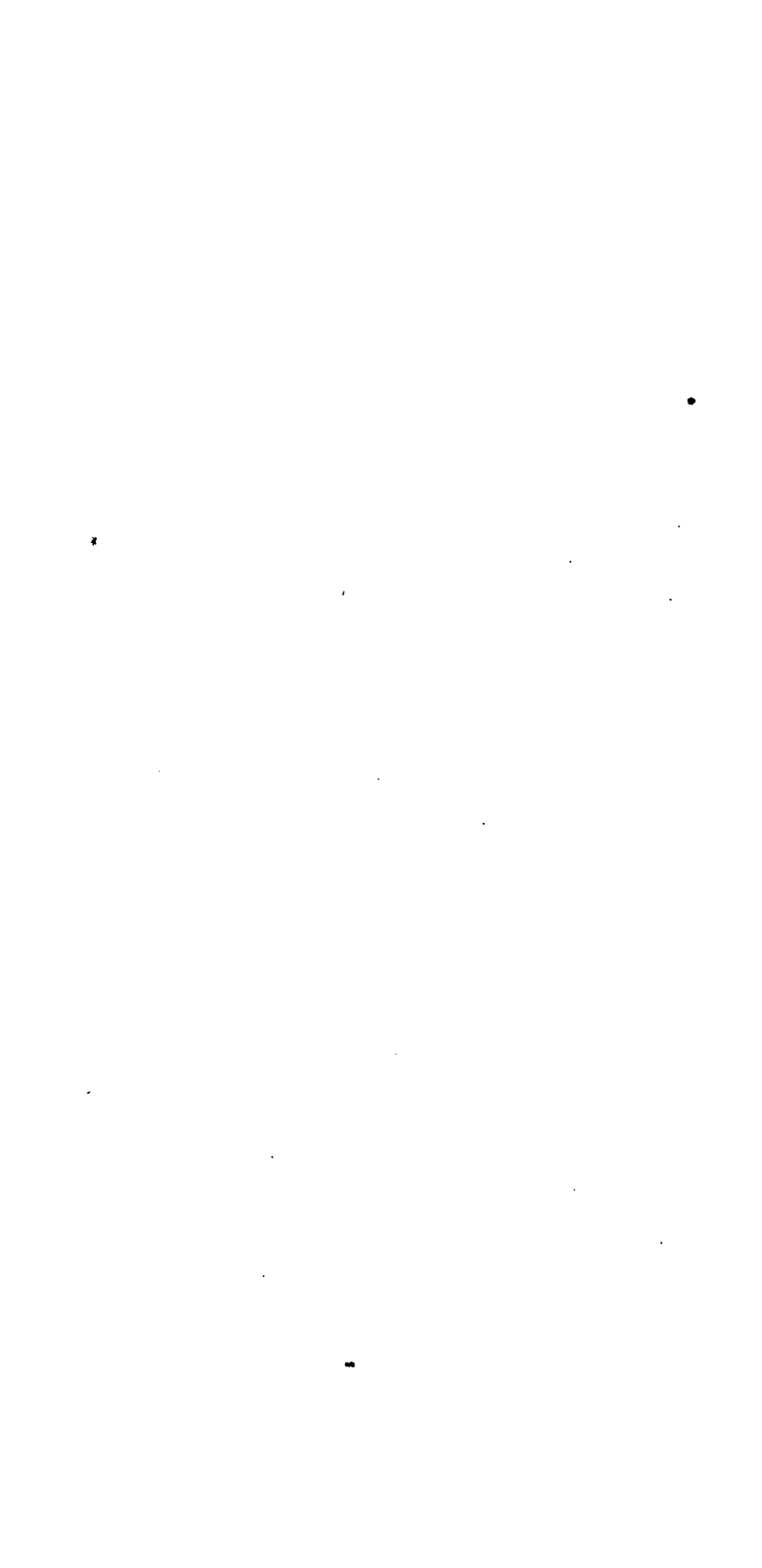
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